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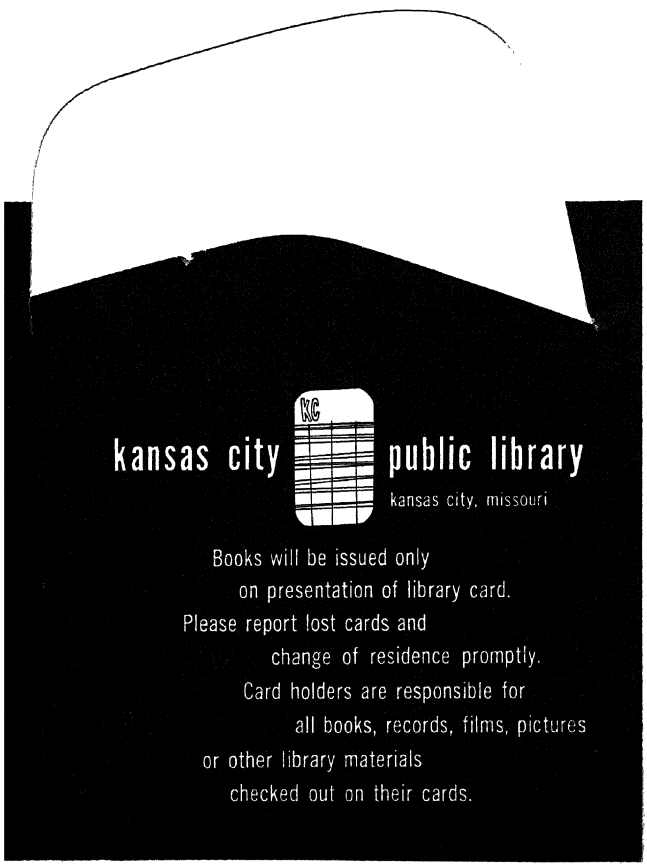
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Master Sermons
of the
Nineteenth Century

Master Sermons of the Nineteenth Century

Edited by

Gaius Glenn Atkins

WILLETT, CLARK & COMPANY

CHICAGO NEW YORK

1940

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Manufactured in The U. S. A. by The Plimpton Press
Norwood, Mass.-La Porte, Ind.

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Introduction

THIS VOLUME was named by the publishers long before it even began to be put together. The publishers thought the time ripe for an anthology of representative sermons by the outstanding preachers of the nineteenth century. The century has been long enough over for pretty definite agreements to have been reached about its greater preachers. Time has done for them its quiet and inexorable work of critical examination and appraisal. The stars of the first magnitude in the British and American pulpits for the last century seem now named and fixed, and can be studied without the refraction of undue partisanship or prejudice.

Naturally, in editing an anthology of master sermons the choice of the master preachers is determinative. If one should begin with the sermons themselves he would, I think, end by spending his life in the proper alcoves of the libraries of theological seminaries, trying, with an impossible mass of material, to reach conclusions for which there are really no final objective tests. With the preachers themselves as controls the task becomes manageable, though one's choices and conclusions would still be open to challenge.

No two students of preaching, familiar with the homiletic material of the century under examination, would agree unanimously in the choice, say, of a dozen preachers to be included. They would probably agree in the majority of their choices and their disagreements would be over exclusions rather than inclusions. The names herein included would, I trust, command the authoritative suffrage of the homiletic classrooms. The only protest would be: "Why are other

preachers of equal distinction left out? By what principle do you thus discriminate among those whose lips have been touched by fire from the altar? "

Unavoidable limitations of space is the first answer. As judicious an effort as this editor is capable of to get a representative balance of style, subject matter, nationality and, to a limited extent, of the preaching of the various Protestant communions, is the second answer. The fallibility of the editor's judgment is the final and covering answer. The choices are entirely from the English-speaking Protestant pulpits. I had not the judgment nor the knowledge to trust myself in any other fields (though I have studied the great French preachers of earlier periods). So much for the choice of preachers; among them they entirely cover the century.

The choice of sermons was more demanding and is less likely to secure the unqualified commendation of professional sermon-tasters. There the personal equation is unescapable. In part, I have been guided by the consensus of critical opinion. Chalmers' sermon on " The Expulsive Power of a New Affection " has always been recognized as one of the great sermons of the century. Mozley's " The Reversal of Human Judgment " has received the same universal approval. On the other hand, Bushnell is best known for " Everyman's Life a Plan of God " and Brooks for " The Candle of the Lord." Since these are in every similar collection, I have left them out here with a fairly good conscience. I have sought in every case representative sermons — representative of the best period of the preachers themselves, representative of their style, ruling ideas and distinctive message. For each preacher had his own message, his own mediation of his gospel determined by temperament, theological inheritance, training, and by what was laid upon him to say to his own people and his own time. Within such spacious frontiers there were puzzling alternatives of choice, and the choices must speak for themselves.

The Chalmers, Channing and Beecher sermons were, together, long enough to make a small volume, each one of them three times as long as the homiletic faculties now enjoin or a congregation is apt to endure. Therefore they have been abridged. I venture to believe that what is gone will not be missed from the structure of the sermons themselves; nor could a critic reconstruct from the context the elided passages — which is, perhaps, a minor commentary on the vanity of excessive utterance. Many of the paragraphs in the texts used were impossibly long. They were, therefore, broken conservatively into shorter paragraphs. In addition, the editor has inserted Roman numerals to make divisions in all the sermons which lacked them; this to help the reader — if it does. The biographical sketches are condensed from many sources and make little attempt to be critical. So much for the editor's apologia.

Since this book is likely to be more read by preachers than by their parishioners — though we could wish it otherwise — and to a degree by teachers of preaching, such estimates of nineteenth century preaching as these sermons may evoke had better be left to fellow craftsmen, and any comparison with contemporary preaching would be hazardous. But these sermons are good subjects for a preacher's study.

I have already remarked on the length of the earlier sermons; one is half through the century before they begin to shorten. This may be taken to indicate a godly patience on the part of congregations — and quite likely it does. It may also be taken to indicate the then priority of preaching in Protestant churches and a golden age in which preaching met with less competition from secular sources. Both for the preacher and for the congregation, such sermons as these were the events of the week, prepared laboriously and lovingly by the preacher, awaited eagerly by the congregation. A sermon was in those days a creation of the artist-prophet and an end in itself. These preachers went to their pulpits as to thrones.

Something, one grants, of the less hurried temper, which read three-volume novels and filled long shelves with Scott, Dickens, Thackeray and the poets, made such preaching as this possible. But the massive amplitude of the preachers' minds also made it possible.

For these men belong to the great and rare company of the master creative artists in every field, and the signal quality of the master creative artist is the amplitude of his resources, the fecundity of his genius. They are the contemporaries of artists who painted on great canvases and kept on painting, of novelists who wrote long novels with crowds of characters and kept on writing, of musicians who composed fourth and fifth and ninth symphonies and kept on composing. That is not always genius, but there is no genius without it. Lesser men can strike twelve once and their noon is passed. These men struck successive noons. They never exhaust themselves.

All this gave to their preaching a solidity of content you have only to touch, to feel and to confess. Modern preaching is brighter, quicker in movement, more concerned for interest-content and possibly more projective. But one might as well admit first as last that, compared with these sermons, most now published sermons are thin. This fecundity of mind — which is the hallmark of genius — issues in an often massive capacity for development and amplification. The style becomes gravely majestical. The sentences may be long, but they are structurally sound and the movements march toward their heights. These sermons also, at their best, glow with a sustained and creative passion. They possess an inner skeletal integrity and rise at intervals to a noble eloquence. They lack the modern psychological technique but they know human nature and touch its faults and failures with uncanny insight. (See Mozley on the delusions of power.) They are structurally textual and biblical; they have a supporting theology. They are both dated and timeless. There is usually in the background something against which the preacher is

opposing himself. But there is also and always something toward which he is pressing, above faction and debate.

These sermons were preached through a century which reexplored and recast almost every province of human thought. But there is surprisingly little of that in them. One could probably reconstruct a good deal of twentieth century storm and stress from twentieth century preaching. But one cannot write a history of the nineteenth century from these sermons. They belong for the most part to the timeless and with little mutation would be true anywhere at any time. They possess a timeless modernity.

What they bequeathed to the twentieth century deserves an inquiry not possible here. But the greatest of these sermons are watersheds from which great influences have drained down. Also the reader may care to trace cross-lines of influence and community of thought through the sermons themselves. They belong exclusively to no theological school. The liberal and the conservative are both represented, though I doubt if any of the preachers thought of themselves in terms of theological positions, save perhaps — and naturally — Channing. For the most part these sermons apply rather than illustrate, but they abound in superb figures of speech. There are passages of glowing imaginative quality, a use of nature not now too common in preaching. There is next to no quotation, save from the Bible. These men did not need to quote, being themselves, like Milton's sun, sources to which

> as to their fountain, other stars
> Repairing in their golden urns draw light.

All great preaching is in part interpretation. Here Bushnell, Brooks and Caird are the interpreters. All great preaching has evangelical passion; here are Robertson, Spurgeon and Moody. All great preaching is a cause and a faith made vocal; here are Chalmers, Channing and Beecher. Here is

Mozley with the cloistered scholar's understanding of life, and here is Martineau in mediation set to the music of perfect utterance.

A friendly group of Auburn students shared these studies with me of winter afternoons while the hearthfire lighted the shadows and a nobler light illumined their young faces. They did a good deal of labor-saving exploratory work and were any dedication needed I would dedicate this book to them, gratefully and affectionately.

GAIUS GLENN ATKINS

North Marshfield, Massachusetts
February 1940

Thomas Chalmers

1780 — 1847

THOMAS CHALMERS was born at East Anstruther, Scotland, March 17, 1780. He died near Edinburgh May 31, 1847. He was the fourth son (there were eventually nine sons) and sixth child in a well-to-do family. His father John was a "dyer, shipowner and general merchant," member of the town council and elder in the kirk — than which Scotland has no more representative or respectable station. The Anstir of Chalmers' boyhood was a leisurely, comfortable place to whose coast the herring came in a summer "drove" along with new potatoes. He made no brilliant record in school, decided, certainly before he was ten years old, to become a minister, and was off to the University of St. Andrews with an elder brother when he was eleven. He had a native aptitude for mathematics, waged his own fight with his inherited Calvinism, read Jonathan Edwards with "mental ecstasy," and in prayer and speech gave early evidence of unusual power.

He seems to have wanted a chair in St. Andrews more than a country living. Actually he got both — an assistantship in mathematics and a rural charge at Kilmany. He was dismissed as assistant professor before long but set up on his own as private tutor in chemistry and mathematics while still minister at Kilmany. The years which followed were shaken by the Napoleonic wars and for Chalmers himself shadowed by the deaths of brothers and sisters. The evangelical movement, begun by Wesley, reached and changed him; also he married. He was called, at thirty-five, to the Tron Church in Glasgow, one of the most desirable pulpits in Scotland, and

attracted immediately a strangely contrasted following, the merchant princes of the city and the poor folk of its crowded tenements.

His sudden fame came like a thunderclap. Lockhart has described him with a wealth of detail — person, voice, manner, and mannerisms which were handicaps rather than helps. His sermons lacked order and argument, "but most unquestionably I have never heard either in England or Scotland any preacher whose eloquence is capable of producing an effect so strong and irresistible as his." Carlyle (whom Chalmers once tried to convert, it is not clear exactly to what) said his sermons "were usually the triumphant onrush of one idea with its satellites and supporters." Robert Hall said the same thing less kindly. He thought Chalmers' faculty of reiteration his most singular characteristic. "His mind resembles . . . a kaleidoscope. Every turn presents the object in a new and beautiful form, but the object presented is still the same. . . . His mind seems to move on hinges, not on wheels: there is incessant motion, but no progress."

Besides his fame and power as a preacher, the outstanding and even more significant aspect of Chalmers' Glasgow ministry was his feeling for the poor and submerged, his distrust of state or city relief and his unique endeavor to make his parish self-supporting in its relief work. This phase of his ministry — if it be considered at all — demands a detailed handling not possible here. Andrew Landale Drummond, in his admirable study, *Edward Irving and His Circle,* has put it all into a concise paragraph. (Irving was for a time Chalmers' associate at St. John's. Carlyle and Jane Welsh are in the background.) Chalmers, says Drummond, tried to "adapt the parochial system to the complex needs of a great city — one of the bravest anachronisms in social history. He would take over the burden of poor relief in his parish. . . . He would minister to the physical, educational needs of the

people and meet the cost, partly by appealing to the independence of those he sought to help, partly by collections at the church plate."

A new parish — St. John's — was formed expressly for the demonstration of this plan; it became Chalmers' kingdom. In the administration of it he gave up every claim upon the poor rates or the general funds of the city. He undertook on his part to meet all the health and help needs of a population of ten thousand very poor people by the resources of the group itself and through voluntary workers — and actually it worked. There are contemporary bearings in the whole experiment which make the records surprisingly good clinical material. In addition Chalmers thought his way into social and industrial problems with an analytical sagacity and foresight which give contemporaneous significance to his extensive writings in these fields.

At the peak of his power in Glasgow he left his pulpit, his social work, his arresting successes, and accepted the chair of moral philosophy at St. Andrews, smallest of the Scotch universities. Why? No one seemed to know then — just another side of a many-sided man asking a chance. Within five years he was appointed to the chair of divinity in the University of Edinburgh and took it as his throne. He was again, and by ripened right, one of the most important men in Scotland. Fifteen years later he led out of St. Andrews Church door a procession, a quarter of a mile long, of Scotch ministers who had surrendered income, living and position for their belief that the Church of Scotland should be free from the state. Lord Jeffrey, when he heard of it, said, "I am proud of my country; there is not another country upon earth where such a deed could have been done."

The free church had everything to build, from the ground up — and they did it. Chalmers' contribution was the conception and inauguration of the Sustentation Fund, and the founding of New College of which he became principal. He

urged and led some renewal of his earlier Glasgow parish dreams, and so redeemed a poor and sad part of Edinburgh. A little later he died in his sleep and was found in the morning with " an expression of fixed and majestic repose."

His sermon, " The Expulsive Power of a New Affection," has been so long recognized not only as his greatest but as one of the great sermons of the nineteenth century as to leave no alternative choice. Its excessive length has made much editing necessary, but I have taken care not to alter its structure or deflect its movement. (Remember that Chalmers had a habit of reiteration.)

THE EXPULSIVE POWER OF A NEW AFFECTION

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 1 JOHN 2:15

THERE ARE two ways in which a practical moralist may attempt to displace from the human heart its love of the world — either by a demonstration of the world's vanity, so as that the heart shall be prevailed upon simply to withdraw its regards from an object that is not worthy of it; or, by setting forth another object, even God, as more worthy of its attachment, so as that the heart shall be prevailed upon, not to resign an old affection which shall have nothing to succeed it, but to exchange an old affection for a new one. My purpose is to show, that from the constitution of our nature, the former method is altogether incompetent and ineffectual — and that the latter method will alone suffice for the rescue and recovery of the heart from the wrong affection that domineers over it. After having accomplished this purpose, I shall attempt a few practical observations.

Love may be regarded in two different conditions. The first is when its object is at a distance, and when it becomes love in a state of desire. The second is when its object is in possession, and then it becomes love in a state of indulgence. Under the impulse of desire, man feels himself urged onward in some path or pursuit of activity for its gratification. The faculties of his mind are put into busy exercise. In the steady direction of one great and engrossing interest, his attention is recalled from the many reveries into which it might otherwise have wandered; and the powers of his body are forced away from an indolence in which it else might have languished; and that time is crowded with occupation, which but for some object of keen and devoted ambition, might have driveled along in successive hours of weariness and distaste — and though hope does not always enliven and success does not always crown this career of exertion, yet in the midst of this very variety, and with the alternations of occasional disappointment, is the machinery of the whole man kept in a sort of congenial play, and unholden in that tone and temper which are most agreeable to it. Insomuch, that if through the extirpation of that desire which forms the originating principle of all this movement, the machinery were to stop, and to receive no impulse from another desire substituted in its place, the man would be left with all his propensities to action in a state of most painful and unnatural abandonment.

. . . Such is the demand of our nature for an object in pursuit, that no accumulation of previous success can extinguish it — and thus it is, that the most prosperous merchant, and the most victorious general, and the most fortunate gamester, when the labor of their respective vocations has come to a close, are often found to languish in the midst of all their acquisitions, as if out of their kindred and rejoicing element. It is quite in vain with such a constitutional appetite for employment in man, to attempt cutting away from him the

spring or the principle of one employment, without providing him with another. The whole heart and habit will rise in resistance against such an undertaking. . . .

The ascendant power of a second affection will do what no exposition, however forcible, of the folly and worthlessness of the first, ever could effectuate. And it is the same in the great world. You never will be able to arrest any of its leading pursuits by a naked demonstration of their vanity. It is quite in vain to think of stopping one of these pursuits in any way else, but by stimulating to another. In attempting to bring a worthy man, intent and busied with the prosecution of his objects, to a dead stand, you have not merely to encounter the charm which he annexes to these objects — but you have to encounter the pleasure which he feels in the very prosecution of them.

It is not enough, then, that you dissipate the charm by your moral and eloquent and affecting exposure of its illusiveness. You must address to the eye of his mind another object, with a charm powerful enough to dispossess the first of its influence, and to engage him in some other prosecution as full of interest and hope and congenial activity, as the former. It is this which stamps an impotency on all moral and pathetic declamation about the insignificance of the world. A man will no more consent to the misery of being without an object, because that object is a trifle, or of being without a pursuit, because that pursuit terminates in some frivolous or fugitive acquirement, than he will voluntarily submit himself to the torture, because that torture is to be of short duration. If to be without desire and without exertion altogether, is a state of violence and discomfort, then the present desire, with its correspondent train of exertion, is not to be got rid of simply by destroying it. It must be by substituting another desire, and another line or habit of exertion in its place — and the most effectual way of withdrawing the mind from one object, is not by turning it away upon desolate

and unpeopled vacancy — but by presenting to its regards another object still more alluring. . . . [Various illustrations omitted.]

I

There is not one of these transformations in which the heart is left without an object. Its desire for one particular object may be conquered; but as to its desire for having some one object or other, this is unconquerable. Its adhesion to that on which it has fastened the preference of its regards, cannot willingly be overcome by the rending away of a simple separation. It can be done only by the application of something else, to which it may feel the adhesion of a still stronger and more powerful preference. Such is the grasping tendency of the human heart, that it must have a something to lay hold of — and which, if wrested away without the substitution of another something in its place, would leave a void and a vacancy as painful to the mind as hunger is to the natural system. . . . The heart must have something to cling to — and never, by its own voluntary consent, will it so denude itself of all its attachments that there shall not be one remaining object that can draw or solicit it. . . .

It is not necessary that a man receive pain from anything, in order to become miserable. It is barely enough that he looks with distaste to everything — and in that asylum which is the repository of minds out of joint, and where the organ of feeling as well as the organ of intellect has been impaired, it is not in the cell of loud and frantic outcries where you will meet with the acme of mental suffering. But that is the individual who outpeers in wretchedness all his fellows, who throughout the whole expanse of nature and society meets not an object that has at all the power to detain or to interest him; who neither in earth beneath, nor in heaven above, knows of a single charm to which his heart can send forth one desirous or responding movement; to whom the world,

in his eye a vast and empty desolation, has left him nothing but his own consciousness to feed upon — dead to all that is without him, and alive to nothing but to the load of his own torpid and useless existence. . . . The moralist who tries such a process of dispossession as this upon the heart is thwarted at every step by the recoil of its own mechanism. . . .

It is not enough . . . to argue the folly of an existing affection. It is not enough, in the terms of a forcible or an affecting demonstration, to make good the evanescence of its object. It may not even be enough to associate the threats and terrors of some coming vengeance with the indulgence of it. The heart may still resist the every application, by obedience to which it would finally be conducted to a state so much at war with all its appetites as that of downright inanition. So to tear away an affection from the heart, as to leave it bare of all its regards, and of all its preferences, were a hard and hopeless undertaking — and it would appear as if the alone powerful engine of dispossession were to bring the mastery of another affection to bear upon it.

We know not a more sweeping interdict upon the affections of nature, than that which is delivered by the apostle in the verse before us. To bid a man into whom there is not yet entered the great and ascendant influence of the principle of regeneration, to bid him withdraw his love from all the things that are in the world, is to bid him give up all the affections that are in his heart. The world is the all of a natural man. He has not a taste, nor a desire, that points not to a something placed within the confines of its visible horizon. He loves nothing above it, and he cares for nothing beyond it; and to bid him love not the world is to pass a sentence of expulsion on all the inmates of his bosom. To estimate the magnitude and the difficulty of such a surrender, let us only think that it were just as arduous to prevail on him not to love wealth, which is but one of the things in the

world, as to prevail on him to set willful fire to his own property.

This he might do with sore and painful reluctance, if he saw that the salvation of his life hung upon it. But this he would do willingly if he saw that a new property of tenfold value was instantly to emerge from the wreck of the old one. In this case there is something more than the mere displacement of an affection. There is the overbearing of one affection by another. But to desolate his heart of all love for the things of the world without the substitution of any love in its place, were to him a process of as unnatural violence, as to destroy all the things he has in the world, and give him nothing in their room. So that, if to love not the world be indispensable to one's Christianity, then the crucifixion of the old man is not too strong a term to mark that transition in his history, when all old things are done away, and all things are become new. . . .

You may remember the fond and unbroken tenacity with which your heart has often recurred to pursuits, over the utter frivolity of which it sighed and wept but yesterday. The arithmetic of your short-lived days may on Sabbath make the clearest impression upon your understanding — and from his fancied bed of death may the Preacher cause a voice to descend in rebuke and mockery on all the pursuits of earthliness — and as he pictures before you the fleeting generations of men, with the absorbing grave, whither all the joys and interests of the world hasten to their sure and speedy oblivion, you may, touched and solemnized by his argument, feel for a moment as if on the eve of a practical and permanent emancipation from the scene of so much vanity.

But the morrow comes, and the business of the world, and the objects of the world, the moving forces of the world come along with it — and the machinery of the heart, in virtue of which it must have something to grasp, or something to adhere to, brings it under a kind of moral necessity to be

actuated just as before — and in utter repulsion toward a state so unkindly as that of being frozen out both of delight and of desire, does it feel all the warmth and the urgency of its wonted solicitations — nor in the habit and history of the whole man can we detect so much as one symptom of the new creature — so that the church, instead of being to him a school of obedience, has been a mere sauntering place for the luxury of a passing and theatrical emotion; and the preaching which is mighty to compel the attendance of multitudes, which is mighty to still and solemnize the hearers into a kind of tragic sensibility, which is mighty in the play of variety and vigor that it can keep up around the imagination, is not mighty to the pulling down of strongholds.

The love of the world cannot be expunged by a mere demonstration of the world's worthlessness. But may it not be supplanted by the love of that which is more worthy than itself? The heart cannot be prevailed upon to part with the world, by a simple act of resignation. But may not the heart be prevailed upon to admit into its preference another, who shall subordinate the world, and bring it down from its wonted ascendancy? If the throne which is placed there must have an occupier, and the tyrant that now reigns has occupied it wrongfully, he may not leave a bosom which would rather detain him than be left in desolation.

But may he not give way to the lawful sovereign, appearing with every charm that can secure his willing admittance, and taking unto Himself his great power to subdue the moral nature of man, and to reign over it? In a word, if the way to disengage the heart from the positive love of one great and ascendant object is to fasten it in positive love to another, then it is not by exposing the worthlessness of the former, but by addressing to the mental eye the worth and excellence of the latter, that all old things are to be done away, and all things are to become new. . . .

II

Thus may we come to perceive what it is that makes the most effective kind of preaching. It is not enough to come forth with a demonstration, however pathetic, of the evanescent character of all its enjoyments. It is not enough to travel the walk of experience along with you, and speak to your own conscience, and your own recollection of the deceitfulness of the heart, and the deceitfulness of all that the heart is set upon. There is many a bearer of the gospel message, who has not shrewdness or natural discernment enough, and who has not power of characteristic description enough, and who has not the talent of moral delineation enough, to present you with a vivid and faithful sketch of the existing follies of society. But that very corruption which he has not the faculty of representing in its visible details, he may practically be the instrument of eradicating in its principle. Let him be but a faithful expounder of the gospel testimony.

Unable as he may be to apply a descriptive hand to the character of the present world, let him but report with accuracy the matter which revelation has brought to him from a distant world — unskilled as he is in the work of so anatomizing the heart, as with the power of a novelist to create a graphical or impressive exhibition of the worthlessness of its many affections — let him only deal in those mysteries of peculiar doctrine on which the best of novelists have thrown the wantonness of their derision. He may not be able, with the eye of shrewd and satirical observation, to expose to the ready recognition of his hearers the desires of worldliness — but with the tidings of the gospel in commission he may wield the only engine that can extirpate them.

He cannot do what some have done, when, as if by the hand of a magician, they have brought out to view, from the hidden recesses of our nature, the foibles and lurking appetites which belong to it. But he has a truth in his possession, which into

whatever heart it enters, will, like the rod of Aaron, swallow up them all; and unqualified as he may be, to describe the old man in all the nicer shading of his natural and constitutional varieties, with him is deposited that ascendant influence under which the leading tastes and tendencies of the old man are destroyed, and he becomes a new creature in Jesus Christ our Lord. . . . [A long examination of the sources of the "incredulity" of a worldly man omitted.]

Now, it is altogether worthy of being remarked of those men who thus disrelish spiritual Christianity, and, in fact, deem it an impracticable acquirement, how much of a piece their incredulity about the demands of Christianity, and their incredulity about the doctrines of Christianity, are with one another. No wonder that they feel the world of the New Testament to be beyond their strength, so long as they hold the world of the New Testament to be beneath their attention. Neither they nor anyone else can dispossess the heart of an old affection, but by the impulsive power of a new one — and, if that new affection be the love of God, neither they nor anyone else can be made to entertain it, but on such a representation of the Deity as shall draw the heart of the sinner toward him. Now it is just their belief which screens from the discernment of their minds this representation.

They do not see the love of God in sending his Son into the world. They do not see the expression of his tenderness to men, in sparing him not, but giving him up unto the death for us all. They do not see the sufficiency of the atonement, or of the sufferings that were endured by him who bore the burden that sinners should have borne. They do not see the blended holiness and compassion of the Godhead, in that he passed by the transgressions of his creatures, yet could not pass them by without an expiation. It is a mystery to them how a man should pass to the state of godliness from a state of nature — but had they only a believing view of God mani-

fest in the flesh, this would resolve for them the whole mystery of godliness. As it is they cannot get quit of their old affections, because they are out of sight from all those truths which have influence to raise a new one. . . .

When told to shut out the world from his heart, this may be impossible with him who has nothing to replace it — but not impossible with him who has found in God a sure and satisfying portion. When told to withdraw his affections from the things that are beneath, this were laying an order of self-extinction upon the man, who knows not another quarter in the whole sphere of his contemplation to which he could transfer them — but it were not grievous to him whose view has been opened to the loveliness and glory of the things that are above, and can there find, for every feeling of his soul, a most ample and delighted occupation. When told to look not to the things that are seen and temporal, this were blotting out the light of all that is visible from the prospect of him in whose eye there is a wall of partition between guilty nature and the joys of eternity — but he who believes that Christ has broken down this wall finds a gathering radiance upon his soul, as he looks onward in faith to the things that are unseen and eternal.

Tell a man to be holy — and how can he compass such a performance, when his fellowship with holiness is a fellowship of despair? It is the atonement of the cross reconciling the holiness of the lawgiver with the safety of the offender, that hath opened the way for a sanctifying influence into the sinner's heart, and he can take a kindred impression from the character of God now brought nigh, and now at peace with him. Separate the demand from the doctrine, and you have either a system of righteousness that is impracticable, or a barren orthodoxy. Bring the demand and the doctrine together, and the true disciple of Christ is able to do the one, through the other strengthening him.

The motive is adequate to the movement; and the bidden

obedience to the gospel is not beyond the measure of his strength, just because the doctrine of the gospel is not beyond the measure of his acceptance. The shield of faith, and the hope of salvation, and the word of God, and the girdle of truth — these are the armor that he has put on; and with these the battle is won, and the eminence is reached, and the man stands on the vantage ground of a new field and a new prospect. The effect is great, but the cause is equal to it — and stupendous as this moral resurrection to the precepts of Christianity undoubtedly is, there is an element of strength enough to give it being and continuance in the principles of Christianity.

The object of the gospel is both to pacify the sinner's conscience and to purify his heart; and it is of importance to observe, that what mars the one of these objects mars the other also. The best way of casting out an impure affection is to admit a pure one; and by the love of what is good to expel the love of what is evil. Thus it is, that the freer the gospel, the more sanctifying is the gospel; and the more it is received as a doctrine of grace, the more will it be felt as a doctrine according to godliness. This is one of the secrets of the Christian life, that the more a man holds of God as a pensioner, the greater is the payment of service that He renders back again.

On the tenure of " Do this and live," a spirit of fearfulness is sure to enter; and the jealousies of a legal bargain chase away all confidence from the intercourse between God and man; and the creature striving to be square and even with his Creator is, in fact, pursuing all the while his own selfishness instead of God's glory; and with all the conformities which he labors to accomplish, the soul of obedience is not there, the mind is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed under such an economy ever can be.

It is only when, as in the gospel, acceptance is bestowed as a present, without money and without price, that the security

which man feels in God is placed beyond the reach of disturbance — or that he can repose in Him as one friend reposes in another — or that any liberal and generous understanding can be established betwixt them — the one party rejoicing over the other to do him good — the other finding that the truest gladness of his heart lies in the impulse of a gratitude by which it is awakened to the charms of a new moral existence. Salvation by grace — salvation by free grace — salvation not of works, but according to the mercy of God — salvation on such a footing is not more indispensable to the deliverance of our persons from the hand of justice than it is to the deliverance of our hearts from the chill and the weight of ungodliness. . . . [The omitted passage glorifies a "free gospel."]

III

To do any work in the best manner, you would make use of the fittest tools for it. And we trust that what has been said may serve in some degree for the practical guidance of those who would like to reach the great moral achievement of our text, but feel that the tendencies and desires of nature are too strong for them. We know of no other way by which to keep the love of the world out of our hearts than to keep in our hearts the love of God — and no other way by which to keep our hearts in the love of God, than by building ourselves on our most holy faith. That denial of the world which is not possible to him that dissents from the gospel testimony, is possible, even as all things are possible to him that believeth. To try this without faith is to work without the right tool or the right instrument. But faith worketh by love; and the way of expelling from the heart the love that transgresseth the law is to admit into its receptacles the love which fulfilleth the law.

Conceive a man to be standing on the margin of this green world, and that, when he looked toward it, he saw abundance

smiling upon every field, and all the blessings which earth can afford, scattered in profusion throughout every family, and the light of the sun sweetly resting upon all the pleasant habitations, and the joys of human companionship brightening many a happy circle of society — conceive this to be the general character of the scene upon one side of his contemplation, and that on the other, beyond the verge of the goodly planet on which he was situated, he could descry nothing but a dark and fathomless unknown. Think you that he would bid a voluntary adieu to all the brightness and all the beauty that were before him upon earth, and commit himself to the frightful solitude away from it? Would he leave its peopled dwelling places, and become a solitary wanderer through the fields of nonentity? If space offered him nothing but a wilderness, would he for it abandon the home-bred scenes of life and of cheerfulness that lay so near, and exerted such a power of urgency to detain him? Would not he cling to the regions of sense, and of life, and of society? — And shrinking away from the desolation that was beyond it, would not he be glad to keep his firm footing on the territory of this world, and to take shelter under the silver canopy that was stretched over it?

But if, during the time of his contemplation, some happy island of the blest had floated by, and there had burst upon his senses the light of its surpassing glories, and its sounds of sweeter melody, and he clearly saw that there a purer beauty rested upon every field, and a more heartfelt joy spread itself among all the families, and he could discern there a peace, and a piety, and a benevolence which put a moral gladness into every bosom, and united the whole society in one rejoicing sympathy with each other, and with the beneficent Father of them all; could he further see that pain and mortality were there unknown, and above all, that signals of welcome were hung out, and an avenue of communication was made for him — perceive you not that what was before the wilderness,

would become the land of invitation, and that now the world would be the wilderness? What unpeopled space could not do, can be done by space teeming with beatific scenes, and beatific society. And let the existing tendencies of the heart be what they may to the scene that is near and visible around us, still if another stood revealed to the prospect of man, either through the channel of faith or through the channel of his senses — then, without violence done to the constitution of his moral nature, may he die unto the present world, and live to the lovelier world that stands in the distance away from it.*

* From *Chalmers' Sermons* (New York: Robert Carter & Bros., 1858). This volume consists of sermons preached in St. John's Church, Glasgow.

William Ellery Channing

1780 — 1842

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING was born at Newport, Rhode Island, April 7, 1780, and died at Bennington, Vermont, October 2, 1842. His father, William Channing, was a lawyer and held several government posts. It was largely through his influence that reluctant Rhode Island, the last of the colonies to ratify the federal Constitution, finally entered the Union. He had been in sympathy with the French Revolution in its early stages. William Ellery, therefore, came by his liberty-loving mind through heredity. His mother was an Ellery and he was, by both ancestral lines, related to the distinguished New England families of Lowells, Cabots, Danas and Lees.

He spent his boyhood in Newport. He later told his one-time fellow townsmen that the influences exerted on his mind by the general tone of Newport religion were unhappy and the morals of its youth perilous. But, he said, he blessed God for the place of his nativity, for there in roaming over its fields and shores his love of liberty sprang up and he received impressions of the great and beautiful which determined his modes of thought and habits of life. There he pursued, for a time, his studies in theology, with no professor or teacher, in a library into which for weeks at a time no one else came, and by the sea where he lifted his voice in praise amid the tempest. There struggling thoughts and emotions broke forth as if moved to utterance by nature's eloquence of the winds and the waves. Something of their tumult and long reverberation became a part of his being and later found an echo in his noblest periods.

His education was not, however, confined to Bailey's Beach. He entered, at fourteen, a Harvard whose social and religious influences were scarcely an improvement on Newport and left behind him there the impression of a serious and introspective youth. He tutored for a year and a half after graduation in a Randolph family in Richmond, Virginia; saw another kind of slavery than Rhode Island then still maintained; touched, marginally, a culture alien to that of New England; seriously injured his health by a strange, self-imposed ascetic discipline. He finished his theological studies at Harvard under conditions still unfavorable to monastic meditation. He became pastor of the Federal Street Church in Boston in 1803 and held that charge until his death in 1842, though with vacations and absences which testify to the loyal long-suffering of his people, their pride in their brilliant pastor and the difficult estate of his health.

Channing was a man of small stature and slight weight, whose eyes and delicate face shone in his high moments with an inner light. He was an artist in speech and reading; his voice was remarkable, not for volume but for its timbre and overtones and his marvelous mastery of it. He weighted simple words with meaning. His heightened passages pulse with their own passion. His widely acknowledged power seems to have been in the inclusiveness of his mind and his balance of gifts.

Emerson said that Channing's eloquence, like Allston's pictures, was fair, serene and unreal. Incidentally Emerson included most of his contemporaries in the same criticism — Irving, Bryant, Everett, even Webster; "all lack nerve and dagger." This lack he was inclined to attribute to a too hasty education and to the absence of competent critics, "a strict tribunal of writers, a graduated intellectual empire established in the land." Channing, he thought, was "intellectual by dint of his fine moral sentiment and not primarily." For all that, he calls him, "whilst he lived . . . the star of

the American church. . . . He could never be reported, for his eye and voice could not be printed. . . . He was made for the public; his cold temperament made him the most unprofitable private companion; but all America would have been impoverished in wanting him. . . . A poor, little invalid all his life, he is yet one of those men who vindicate the power of the American race to produce greatness."

It would take the whole course of colonial New England theology with Geneva added to diagram the theological pattern against which Channing reacted with characteristic passion and power. It would take the hopes and dreams of the new republic, the generous and romantic ferment of the contemporaneous human mind and spirit for which nothing was impossible and wrongs existed only to be righted, and the oversoul brooding above low Concord hills to explain the movements then begun and the causes to which the crusaders of the ideal devoted themselves. Nothing less than a Society for Universal Reform contented such crusaders.

> Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven.

Channing himself in the introduction to his complete published works indicates his ruling ideas: a high estimate of human nature, a passion for social reform rooted in reverence for human nature, and a love of liberty. Out of these three motifs Channing elaborated his theology, his philosophy of life and his vast and varied appeal. Although he was best known as a preacher, his sermons are the lesser part of his published work. His addresses against war were pioneering and prophetic. His hatred of slavery made him the comrade of Garrison. His concern for education and culture veins all his written work. "His printed writings," Emerson said, "are almost a history of the times; as there was no great public interest . . . on which he did not leave some printed record of his brave and thoughtful opinion."

His best known addresses are on war; his most famous sermon is his "Discourse at the Ordination of the Rev. Jared Sparks, Baltimore, 1819," which became the Magna Charta of American Unitarianism. I have chosen, however, his sermon on "Spiritual Freedom," preached at the annual election, May 26, 1830. Since it was more than ten thousand words long, I have edited it considerably, though unwillingly, and not doing it essential wrong. Some of its paragraphs are among his best known passages. Its entire spirit is Channing true to himself. His finest epitaph is on the pedestal of his statue in Boston Public Garden: "He breathed into theology a human spirit and nothing human was alien to him."

SPIRITUAL FREEDOM

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. . . . If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

JOHN 8:31, 32, 36

THE SCRIPTURES continually borrow from nature and social life illustrations and emblems of spiritual truth. The character, religion and blessings of Jesus Christ are often placed before us by sensible images. His influences on the mind are shadowed forth by the light of the sun, by the vital union of the head with the members, by the shepherd bringing back the wandering flock, by the vine which nourishes and fructifies the branches, by the foundation sustaining the edifice, by bread and wine invigorating the animal frame.

In our text we have a figurative illustration of his influence on religion, peculiarly intelligible and dear to this community. He speaks of himself as giving freedom, that great

good of individuals and states; and by this similitude he undoubtedly intended to place before men, in a strong and attractive light, that spiritual and inward liberty which his truth confers on its obedient disciples. Inward spiritual liberty, this is the great gift of Jesus Christ. This will be the chief topic of the present discourse. I wish to show that this is the supreme good of men, and that civil and political liberty has but little worth but as it springs from and invigorates this.

. . . I shall maintain that the highest interest of communities, as well as individuals, is a spiritual interest; that outward and earthly goods are of little worth but as bearing on the mind, and tending to its liberation, strength and glory. And I am fully aware that in taking that course I lay myself open to objection. I shall be told that I show my ignorance of human nature in attempting to interest men by such refined views of society; that I am too speculative; that spiritual liberty is too unsubstantial and visionary to be proposed to statesmen as an end in legislation; that the dreams of the closet should not be obtruded on practical men; that gross and tangible realities can alone move the multitude; and that to talk to politicians of the spiritual interests of society as of supreme importance, is as idle as to try to stay with a breath the force of the whirlwind.

I anticipate such objections. But they do not move me. I firmly believe that the only truth which is to do men lasting good is that which relates to the soul, which carries them into its depths, which reveals to them its powers and the purposes of its creation. The progress of society is retarded by nothing more than by the low views which its leaders are accustomed to take of human nature. Man has a mind as well as a body, and this he ought to know; and till he knows it, feels it, and is deeply penetrated by it, he knows nothing aright. His body should, in a sense, vanish away before his mind; or, in the language of Christ, he should hate his

animal life in comparison with the intellectual and moral life which is to endure forever. . . . I know no wisdom, but that which reveals man to himself, and which teaches him to regard all social institutions, and his whole life, as the means of unfolding and exalting the spirit within him. All policy which does not recognize this truth seems to me shallow. The statesman who does not look at the bearing of his measures on the mind of a nation is unfit to touch one of men's great interests. Unhappily, statesmen have seldom understood the sacredness of human nature and human society. Hence policy has become almost a contaminated word. Hence government has so often been the scourge of mankind.

I mean not to disparage political science. The best constitution and the best administration of a state are subjects worthy of the profoundest thought. But there are deeper foundations of public prosperity than these. The statesman who would substitute these for that virtue which they ought to subserve and exalt will only add his name to the long catalogue which history preserves of baffled politicians. It is idle to hope, by our short-sighted contrivances, to insure to a people a happiness which their own character has not earned. The everlasting laws of God's moral government we cannot repeal; and parchment constitutions, however wise, will prove no shelter from the retributions which fall on a degraded community.

With these convictions, I feel that no teaching is so practical as that which impresses on a people the importance of their spiritual interests. With these convictions, I feel that I cannot better meet the demands of this occasion than by leading you to prize, above all other rights and liberties, that inward freedom which Christ came to confer. To this topic I now solicit your attention.

I

And first, I may be asked what I mean by inward spiritual freedom. The common and true answer is, that it is freedom from sin. I apprehend, however, that to many, if not to most, these words are too vague to convey a full and deep sense of the greatness of the blessing. Let me, then, offer a brief explanation; and the most important remark in illustrating this freedom is, that it is not a negative state, not the mere absence of sin; for such a freedom may be ascribed to inferior animals, or to children before becoming moral agents. Spiritual freedom is the attribute of a mind in which reason and conscience have begun to act, and which is free through its own energy, through fidelity to the truth, through resistance of temptation. I cannot, therefore, better give my views of spiritual freedom, than by saying that it is moral energy or force of holy purpose put forth against the senses, against the passions, against the world, and thus liberating the intellect, conscience and will, so that they may act with strength and unfold themselves forever. The essence of spiritual freedom is power. A man liberated from sensual lusts by a palsy would not therefore be free.

He only is free who, through self-conflict and moral resolution, sustained by trust in God, subdues the passions which have debased him, and, escaping the thralldom of low objects, binds himself to pure and lofty ones. That mind alone is free which, looking to God as the inspirer and rewarder of virtue, adopts his law, written on the heart and in his Word, as its supreme rule, and which, in obedience to this, governs itself, reveres itself, exerts faithfully its best powers, and unfolds itself by well-doing in whatever sphere God's providence assigns.

It has pleased the All-wise Disposer to encompass us from our birth by difficulty and allurement, to place us in a world where wrongdoing is often gainful, and duty rough and peril-

ous, where many vices oppose the dictates of the inward monitor, where the body presses as a weight on the mind, and matter, by its perpetual agency on the senses, becomes a barrier between us and the spiritual world. We are in the midst of influences which menace the intellect and heart; and to be free is to withstand and conquer these.

I call that mind free which masters the senses, which protects itself against animal appetites, which condemns pleasure and pain in comparison with its own energy, which penetrates beneath the body and recognizes its own reality and greatness, which passes life, not in asking what it shall eat or drink, but in hungering, thirsting and seeking after righteousness.

I call that mind free which escapes the bondage of matter, which, instead of stopping at the material universe and making it a prison wall, passes beyond it to its Author, and finds in the radiant signatures which it everywhere bears of the Infinite Spirit, helps to its own spiritual enlargement.

I call that mind free which jealously guards its intellectual rights and powers, which calls no man master, which does not content itself with a passive or hereditary faith, which opens itself to light whencesoever it may come, which receives new truth as an angel from heaven, which, whilst consulting others, inquires still more of the oracle within itself, and uses instructions from abroad not to supersede but to quicken and exalt its own energies.

I call that mind free which sets no bounds to its love, which is not imprisoned in itself or in a sect, which recognizes in all human beings the image of God and the rights of his children, which delights in virtue and sympathizes with suffering wherever they are seen, which conquers pride, anger and sloth, and offers itself up a willing victim to the cause of mankind.

I call that mind free which is not passively framed by outward circumstances, which is not swept away by the tor-

rent of events, which is not the creature of accidental impulse, but which bends events to its own improvement, and acts from an inward spring, from immutable principles which it has deliberately espoused.

I call that mind free which protects itself against the usurpations of society, which does not cower to human opinion, which feels itself accountable to a higher tribunal than man's, which respects a higher law than fashion, which respects itself too much to be the slave or tool of the many or the few.

I call that mind free which, through confidence in God and in the power of virtue, has cast off all fear but that of wrongdoing, which no menace or peril can enthrall, which is calm in the midst of tumults, and possesses itself though all else be lost.

I call that mind free which resists the bondage of habit, which does not mechanically repeat itself and copy the past, which does not live on its old virtues, which does not enslave itself to precise rules, but which forgets what is behind, listens for new and higher monitions of conscience, and rejoices to pour itself forth in fresh and higher exertions.

I call that mind free which is jealous of its own freedom, which guards itself from being merged in others, which guards its empire over itself as nobler than the empire of the world.

In fine, I call that mind free which, conscious of its affinity with God, and confiding in his promises by Jesus Christ, devotes itself faithfully to the unfolding of all its powers, which passes the bounds of time and death, which hopes to advance forever, and which finds inexhaustible power, both for action and suffering, in the prospect of immortality.

Such is the spiritual freedom which Christ came to give. It consists in moral force, in self-control, in the enlargement of thought and affection, and in the unrestrained action of our best powers. This is the great good of Christianity, nor

can we conceive a greater within the gift of God. I know that to many this will seem too refined a good to be proposed as the great end of society and government. But our skepticism cannot change the nature of things. I know how little this freedom is understood or enjoyed, how enslaved men are to sense, and passion, and the world; and I know, too, that through this slavery they are wretched, and that while it lasts no social institution can give them happiness.

II

I now proceed, as I proposed, to show that civil or political liberty is of little worth but as it springs from, expresses and invigorates this spiritual freedom. I account civil liberty as the chief good of states, because it accords with, and ministers to, energy and elevation of mind. Nor is this a truth so remote or obscure as to need laborious proof or illustration. For consider what civil liberty means. It consists in the removal of all restraint but such as the public weal demands. And what is the end and benefit of removing restraint? It is that men may put forth their powers and act from themselves. Vigorous and invigorating action is the chief fruit of all outward freedom. Why break the chains from the captive but that he may bring into play his liberated limbs? Why open his prison but that he may go forth and open his eyes on a wide prospect, and exert and enjoy his various energies? Liberty which does not minister to action and the growth of power, is only a name, is no better than slavery.

The chief benefit of free institutions is clear and unutterably precious. Their chief benefit is that they aid freedom of mind, that they give scope to man's faculties, that they throw him on his own resources, and summon him to work out his own happiness. It is that, by removing restraint from intellect, they favor force, originality and enlargement

they favor the ascent of the soul to God. It is that, by removing restraint from industry, they stir up invention and enterprise to explore and subdue the material world, and thus rescue the race from those sore physical wants and pains which narrow and blight the mind. It is that they cherish noble sentiments, frankness, courage and self-respect. . . .

Without this inward spiritual freedom outward liberty is of little worth. What boots it that I am crushed by no foreign yoke if, through ignorance and vice, through selfishness and fear, I want the command of my own mind? The worst tyrants are those which establish themselves in our own breast. The man who wants force of principle and purpose is a slave, however free the air he breathes. The mind, after all, is our only possession, or, in other words, we possess all things through its energy and enlargement; and civil institutions are to be estimated by the free and pure minds to which they give birth.

It will be seen from these remarks, that I consider the freedom or moral strength of the individual mind as the supreme good, and the highest end of government. I am aware that other views are often taken. It is said that government is intended for the public, for the community, not for the individual. The idea of a national interest prevails in the minds of statesmen, and to this it is thought that the individual may be sacrificed. But I would maintain, that the individual is not made for the state so much as the state for the individual. A man is not created for political relations as his highest end, but for indefinite spiritual progress, and is placed in political relations as the means of his progress. The human soul is greater, more sacred, than the state, and must never be sacrificed to it. The human soul is to outlive all earthly institutions. The distinction of nations is to pass away. Thrones, which have stood for ages, are to meet the doom pronounced upon all man's works. But the individual mind survives, and the obscurest subject,

if true to God, will rise to a power never wielded by earthly potentates. . . .

In thus maintaining that the individual is the end of social institutions, I may be thought to discourage public efforts and the sacrifice of private interests to the state. Far from it. No man, I affirm, will serve his fellow beings so effectually, so fervently, as he who is not their slave — as he who, casting off every other yoke, subjects himself to the law of duty in his own mind. For this law enjoins a disinterested and generous spirit as man's glory and likeness to his Maker. Individuality, or moral self-subsistence, is the surest foundation of an all-comprehending love. No man so multiplies his bonds with the community as he who watches most jealously over his own perfection. There is a beautiful harmony between the good of the state and the moral freedom and dignity of the individual. Were it not so, were these interests in any case discordant, were an individual ever called to serve his country by acts debasing his own mind, he ought not to waver a moment as to the good which he should prefer. Property, life, he should joyfully surrender to the state. But his soul he must never stain or enslave. . . . [An omitted paragraph elaborates this.]

III

I have thus endeavored to illustrate and support the doctrine that spiritual freedom, or force and elevation of soul, is the great good to which civil freedom is subordinate, and which all social institutions should propose as their supreme end.

I proceed to point out some of the means by which this spiritual liberty may be advanced; and, passing over a great variety of topics, I shall confine myself to two — religion and government.

I begin with religion, the mightiest agent in human affairs. To this belongs preeminently the work of freeing and elevat-

ing the mind. All other means are comparatively impotent. The sense of God is the only spring by which the crushing weight of sense, of the world, and temptation, can be withstood. Without a consciousness of our relation to God, all other relations will prove adverse to spiritual life and progress. I have spoken of the religious sentiment as the mightiest agent on earth. It has accomplished more, it has strengthened men to do and suffer more, than all other principles. It can sustain the mind against all other powers. Of all principles it is the deepest, the most ineradicable. In its perversion, indeed, it has been fruitful of crime and woe; but the very energy which it has given to the passions, when they have mixed with and corrupted it, teaches us the omnipotence with which it is imbued.

Religion gives life, strength, elevation to the mind, by connecting it with the Infinite Mind; by teaching it to regard itself as the offspring and care of the Infinite Father, who created it that he might communicate to it his own spirit and perfections, who framed it for truth and virtue, who framed it for himself, who subjects it to sore trials, that by conflict and endurance it may grow strong, and who has sent his Son to purify it from every sin, and to clothe it with immortality. It is religion alone which nourishes patient, resolute hopes and efforts for our own souls. Without it we can hardly escape self-contempt and the contempt of our race.

Without God our existence has no support, our life no aim, our improvements no permanence, our best labors no sure and enduring results, our spiritual weakness no power to lean upon, and our noblest aspirations and desires no pledge of being realized in a better state. Struggling virtue has no friend; suffering virtue no promise of victory. Take away God, and life becomes mean, and man poorer than the brute. I am accustomed to speak of the greatness of human nature; but it is great only through its parentage; great, because descended from God, because connected with a good-

ness and power from which it is to be enriched forever; and nothing but the consciousness of this connection can give that hope of elevation through which alone the mind is to rise to true strength and liberty.

All the truths of religion conspire to one end — spiritual liberty. All the objects which it offers to our thoughts are sublime, kindling, exalting. Its fundamental truth is the existence of one God, one infinite and everlasting Father; and it teaches us to look on the universe as pervaded, quickened, and vitally joined into one harmonious and beneficent whole, by his ever present and omnipotent love. By this truth it breaks the power of matter and sense, of present pleasure and pain, of anxiety and fear. It turns the mind from the visible, the outward and perishable, to the unseen, spiritual and eternal, and, allying it with pure and great objects, makes it free. . . .

I do not indeed wonder that so many doubt the power of religion to give strength, dignity, and freedom to the mind. What bears this name too often yields no such fruits. Here, religion is a form, a round of prayers and rites, an attempt to propitiate God by flattery and fawning. There, it is terror and subjection to a minister or priest; and there, it is a violence of emotion, bearing away the mind like a whirlwind, and robbing it of self-direction. But true religion disclaims connection with these usurpers of its name. It is a calm, deep conviction of God's paternal interest in the improvement, happiness and honor of his creatures — a practical persuasion that he delights in virtue and not in forms and flatteries, and that he especially delights in resolute effort to conform ourselves to the disinterested love and rectitude which constitute his own glory. It is for this religion that I claim the honor of giving dignity and freedom to the mind. . . .

You tell me of civilization, of its arts and sciences, as the sure instruments of human elevation. You tell me, how by these man masters and bends to his use the powers of nature.

I know he masters them, but it is to become in turn their slave. He explores and cultivates the earth, but it is to grow more earthly. He explores the hidden mine, but it is to forge himself chains. He visits all regions, but therefore lives a stranger to his own soul. In the very progress of civilization I see the need of an antagonist principle to the senses, of a power to free man from matter, to recall him from the outward to the inward world; and religion alone is equal to so great a work. . . .

IV

I confess I look round on civilized society with many fears, and with more and more earnest desire that a regenerating spirit from heaven, from religion, may descend upon and pervade it. I particularly fear that various causes are acting powerfully among ourselves for property. For example, the absence of hereditary distinctions in our country gives prominence to the distinction of wealth, and holds up this as the chief prize to ambition. Add to this the epicurean, self-indulgent habits which our prosperity has multiplied, and which crave insatiably for enlarging wealth as the only means of gratification. This peril is increased by the spirit of our times, which is a spirit of commerce, industry, internal improvements, mechanical invention, political economy and peace. Think not that I would disparage commerce, mechanical skill, and especially pacific connections among states. But there is danger that these blessings may by perversion issue in a slavish love of lucre.

It seems to me that some of the objects which once moved men most powerfully are gradually losing their sway, and thus the mind is left more open to the excitement of wealth. For example, military distinction is taking the inferior place which it deserves; and the consequence will be, that the energy and ambition which have been exhausted in war will seek new directions; and happy shall we be if they do not

flow into the channel of gain. So I think that political eminence is to be less and less coveted; and there is danger that the energies absorbed by it will be spent in seeking another kind of dominion — the dominion of property. . . . [What then is gained by what is called the progress of society?]

In order, however, that religion should yield its full and best fruits, one thing is necessary; and the times require that I should state it with great distinctness. It is necessary that religion should be held and professed in a liberal spirit. Just as far as it assumes an intolerant, exclusive, sectarian form, it subverts, instead of strengthening, the soul's freedom, and becomes the heaviest and most galling yoke which is laid on the intellect and conscience. Religion must be viewed, not as a monopoly of priests, ministers, or sects; not as conferring on any man a right to dictate to his fellow beings; not as an instrument by which the few may awe the many; not as bestowing on one a prerogative which is not enjoyed by all; but as the property of every human being, and as the great subject for every human mind.

It must be regarded as the revelation of a common Father, to whom all have equal access, who invites all to the like immediate communion, who has no favorites, who has appointed no infallible expounders of his will, who opens his works and word to every eye, and calls upon all to read for themselves, and to follow fearlessly the best convictions of their own understandings. Let religion be seized on by individuals or sects, as their special province; let them clothe themselves with God's prerogative of judgment; let them succeed in enforcing their creed by penalties of law or penalties of opinion; let them succeed in fixing a brand on virtuous men, whose only crime is free investigation; and religion becomes the most blighting tyranny which can establish itself over the mind. . . .

I look with a solemn joy on the heroic spirits who have met freely and fearlessly pain and death in the cause of truth and

human rights. But there are other victims of intolerance on whom I look with unmixed sorrow. They are those who, spellbound by early prejudice, or by intimidations from the pulpit and the press, dare not think; who anxiously stifle every doubt or misgiving in regard to their opinions, as if to doubt were a crime; who shrink from the seekers after truth as from infection; who deny all virtue which does not wear the livery of their own sect; who, surrendering to others their best powers, receive unresistingly a teaching which wars against reason and conscience; and who think it a merit to impose on such as live within their influence the grievous bondage which they bear themselves. How much to be deplored is it that religion, the very principle which is designed to raise men above the judgment and power of man, should become the chief instrument of usurpation over the soul. . . . [Follows an examination of the hostility of sectarianism to liberty.]

I have spoken with great freedom of the sectarian and exclusive spirit of our age. I would earnestly recommend liberality of feeling and judgment towards men of different opinions. But, in so doing, I intend not to teach that opinions are of small moment, or that we should make no effort for spreading such as we deem the truth of God. I do mean, however, that we are to spread them by means which will not enslave ourselves to a party or bring others into bondage. We must respect alike our own and others' minds. We must not demand a uniformity in religion which exists nowhere else, but expect, and be willing, that the religious principle, like other principles of our nature, should manifest itself in different methods and degrees. . . . Under the disguises of papal and Protestant creeds, let us learn to recognize the lovely aspect of Christianity, and rejoice to believe that, amidst dissonant forms and voices, the common Father discerns and accepts the same deep filial adoration. This is true freedom and enlargement of mind — a liberty which he who knows it

would not barter for the widest dominion which priests and sects have usurped over the human soul.

V

I have spoken of religion; I pass to government, another great means of promoting that spiritual liberty, that moral strength and elevation, which we have seen to be our supreme good. I thus speak of government, not because it always promotes this end, but because it may and should thus operate. Civil institutions should be directed chiefly to a moral or spiritual good, and until this truth is felt they will continue, I fear, to be perverted into instruments of crime, and misery. . . . There is a unity in our whole being. There is one great end for which body and mind were created, and all the relations of life were ordained; one central aim, to which our whole being should tend; and this is the unfolding of our intellectual and moral nature; and no man thoroughly understands government but he who reverences it as a part of God's stupendous machinery for this sublime design. . . .

The chief ties that hold men together in communities are not self-interests, or compacts, or positive institutions, or force. They are invisible, refined, spiritual ties, bonds of the mind and heart. Our best powers and affections crave instinctively for society as the sphere in which they are to find their life and happiness. That men may greatly strengthen and improve society by written constitutions, I readily grant. There is, however, a constitution which precedes all of men's making, and after which all others are to be formed; a constitution, the great lines of which are drawn in our very nature; a primitive law of justice, rectitude and philanthropy, which all other laws are bound to enforce, and from which all others derive their validity and worth. . . .

Unhappily, governments have seldom recognized as the highest duty the obligation of strengthening pure and noble principle in the community. I fear they are even to be num-

bered among the chief agents in corrupting nations. Of all the doctrines by which vice has propagated itself, I know none more pernicious than the maxim that statesmen are exempted from the common restraints of morality, that nations are not equally bound with individuals by the eternal laws of justice and philanthropy. Through this doctrine vice has lifted its head unblushingly in the most exalted stations. Vice has seated itself on the throne. The men who have wielded the power and riveted the gaze of nations have lent the sanction of their greatness to crime. In the very heart of nations, in the cabinet of rulers, has been bred a moral pestilence which has infected and contaminated all orders of the state. Through the example of rulers, private men have learned to regard the everlasting law as a temporary conventional rule, and been blinded to the supremacy of virtue. . . . [" There is no foundation for the vulgar doctrine that a state may flourish by arts and crimes. . . . Nations and individuals are subjected to one law. . . . No calamity can befall a people so great as temporary success through a criminal policy."]

I especially believe that communities suffer sorely by that species of immorality which the herd of statesmen have industriously cherished as of signal utility — I mean, by hostile feeling towards other countries. The common doctrine has been, that prejudice and enmity towards foreign states are means of fostering a national spirit, and of confirming union at home. But bad passions, once instilled into a people, will never exhaust themselves abroad. Vice never yields the fruits of virtue. Injustice to strangers does not breed justice to our friends. Malignity, in every form, is a fire of hell, and the policy which feeds it is infernal. Domestic feuds and the madness of party are its natural and necessary issues; and a people hostile to others will demonstrate, in its history, that no form of inhumanity or injustice escapes its just retribution. . . .

I know that it is supposed that political wisdom can so form

institutions as to extract from them freedom, notwithstanding a people's sins. The chief expedient for this purpose has been to balance, as it is called, men's passions and interests against each other; to use one man's selfishness as a check against his neighbor's; to produce peace by the counteraction and equilibrium of hostile forces. This whole theory I distrust. The vices can by no management or skillful poising be made to do the work of virtue. Our own history has already proved this.

Our government was founded on the doctrine of checks and balances; and what does experience teach us? It teaches what the principles of our nature might have taught, that whenever the country is divided into two great parties, the dominant party will possess itself of both branches of the legislature, and of the different departments of the state, and will move towards its objects with as little check, and with as determined purpose, as if all powers were concentrated in a single body. There is no substitute for virtue. Free institutions secure rights only when secured by, and when invigorating that spiritual freedom, that moral power and elevation, which I have set before you as the supreme good of our nature.

According to these views, the first duty of a statesman is to build up the moral energy of a people. This is their first interest; and he who weakens it inflicts an injury which no talent can repair; nor should any splendor of services, or any momentary success, avert from him the infamy which he has earned. Let public men learn to think more reverently of their function. Let them feel that they are touching more vital interests than property. Let them fear nothing so much as to sap the moral convictions of a people by unrighteous legislation or a selfish policy. Let them cultivate in themselves the spirit of religion and virtue, as the first requisite to public station. Let no apparent advantage to the community, any more than to themselves, secure them to the infraction of any moral law. Let them put faith in virtue as the strength of

nations. Let them not be disheartened by temporary ill success in upright exertion. Let them remember that, while they and their contemporaries live but for a day, the state is to live for ages; and that time, the unerring arbiter, will vindicate the wisdom as well as the magnanimity of the public man who, confiding in the power of truth, justice and philanthropy, asserts their claims, and reverently follows their monitions, amidst general disloyalty and corruption. . . .

I find in the New Testament no class of human beings whom charity is instructed to forsake. I find no exception made by him who came to seek and save that which was lost. I must add, that the most hopeless subjects are not always to be found in prisons. That convicts are dreadfully corrupt, I know; but not more corrupt than some who walk at large, and are not excluded from our kindness. The rich man who defrauds is certainly as criminal as the poor man who steals. The rich man who drinks to excess contracts deeper guilt than he who sinks into this vice under the pressure of want. The young man who seduces innocence deserves more richly the house of correction than the unhappy female whom he allured into the path of destruction.

Still more, I cannot but remember how much the guilt of the convict results from the general corruption of society. When I reflect how much of the responsibility for crimes rests on the state, how many of the offenses which are most severely punished are to be traced to neglected education, to early squalid want, to temptations and exposures which society might do much to relieve — I feel that a spirit of mercy should temper legislation; that we should not sever ourselves so widely from our fallen brethren; that we should recognize in them the countenance and claims of humanity; that we should strive to win them back to God. . . .

VI

In this discourse I have insisted on the supreme importance of virtuous principle, of moral force, and elevation in the community; and I have thus spoken, not that I might conform to professional duty, but from deep personal conviction. I feel — as I doubt not many feel — that the great distinction of a nation, the only one worth possession, and which brings after it all other blessings, is the prevalence of pure principle among the citizens. I wish to belong to a state in the character and institutions of which I may find a spring of improvement, which I can speak of with an honest pride, in whose records I may meet great and honored names, and which is making the world its debtor by its discoveries of truth, and by an example of virtuous freedom.

Oh, save me from a country which worships wealth and cares not for true glory; in which intrigue bears rule; in which patriotism borrows its zeal from the prospect of office; in which hungry sycophants besiege with supplications all the departments of state; in which public men bear the brand of vice, and the seat of government is a noisome sink of private licentiousness and political corruption! Tell me not of the honor of belonging to a free country. I ask, does our liberty bear generous fruits? Does it exalt us in manly spirit, in public virtue, above countries trodden under foot by despotism? Tell me not of the extent of our territory. I care not how large it is if it multiply degenerate men. Speak not of our prosperity. Better be one of a poor people, plain in manners, revering God and respecting themselves, than belong to a rich country which knows no higher good than riches. . . .

Of this country I may say with peculiar emphasis that its happiness is bound up in its virtue. On this our union can alone stand firm. Our union is not like that of other nations, confirmed by the habits of ages and riveted by force. It is a recent, and, still more, a voluntary union. It is idle to talk

of force as binding us together. Nothing can retain a member of this confederacy when resolved on separation. The only bonds that can permanently unite us are moral ones. That there are repulsive powers, principles of discord, in these states, we all feel. The attraction which is to counteract them is only to be found in a calm wisdom, controlling the passions, in a spirit of equity and regard to the common weal, and in virtuous patriotism, clinging to union as the only pledge of freedom and peace.

The union is threatened by sectional jealousies and collisions of local interests, which can be reconciled only by a magnanimous liberality. It is endangered by the prostitution of executive patronage, through which the public treasury is turned into a fountain of corruption, and by the lust for power which perpetually convulses the country for the sake of throwing office into new hands; and the only remedy for these evils is to be found in the moral indignation of the community, in a pure, lofty spirit, which will overwhelm with infamy this selfish ambition.

To the chief magistrate of this commonwealth, and to those associated with him in the executive and legislative departments, I respectfully commend the truths which have now been delivered; and, with the simplicity becoming a minister of Jesus Christ, I would remind them of their solemn obligations to God, to their fellow creatures, and to the interests of humanity, freedom, virtue and religion. We trust that, in their high stations, they will seek, not themselves, but the public weal, and will seek it by inflexible adherence to the principles of the Constitution, and still more to the principles of God's everlasting law.*

* From *The Works of William E. Channing, D.D.* (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1877).

John Henry Newman

1801 — 1890

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN was born in Old Broad street in the city of London on February 21, 1801. He died in Birmingham Oratory, August 11, 1890, and was buried at Rednal in the same grave with Ambrose St. John. His life, therefore, is almost one with the nineteenth century in its span. He cannot be understood save in his relations to his century and it is impossible to put these into any brief form; they were too many and too involved. His life had from first to last a strange quality of remoteness from the world and yet his own distinctive world — the world of English-speaking religious thought — was interpenetrated by the filaments of his mind and genius, just as all he said and did was in relation and reaction to that same world.

He himself has written, in well known passages, of men with whom the world does not know how to deal, who dwell in another sphere and are beyond the force of the world's analysis or the capacities of its calculation, but who nevertheless not only defy the world but eventually have their way with it. He seems to have belonged to that order. He was known during his time and has been remembered since for many things — for the movement which he led in Anglicanism and which in the issue of it in his own mind led him out of Anglicanism; for his unexpectedly tenacious, effective and sometimes unfair capacity for controversy. Despite his mournful protests against being compelled to use his goose quill as a weapon of offense and defense, he seems to have loved controversy and to have found in it the same release

that other men, inhibited in other fields, have found in conducting their fights upon the terrain of opinion.

He was known and is remembered for the drama of his own inner life of which he made a telling exposition in his *Apologia,* and for the drama of his ecclesiastical life which brought him from an Oxford donship to the cardinalate of the Roman Church. He is remembered also for a volume of letter writing hardly equaled in a time when such writing was characteristic of the great and the near-great; for one hymn which will endure as long as Christian hymnology; for his power to evoke loyalties and engender antipathies. And he keeps on being remembered because of his fascination for the biographer.

Newman's best bid for long recollection and recognition was his preaching — in St. Mary's at Oxford, as parish priest at Littlemore, as England's most distinguished convert to the Roman communion. The substance of all he wrote in other fields is in his sermons,* which are Newman at his best in insight and unrivaled mastery of English diction. The testimonies to his power as a preacher during his university tenure are so definite and various as to convince one that elements in his appeal escape the printed page. But there are enough of them there, though I am persuaded that Newman's finest gifts are found in a Newman anthology and not in even the most distinguished single sermons.

Newman preached always out of a sovereign sense of the confusion, the brief mystery and the sure doom of this present world. God was marching down upon that world both to avenge and to deliver. For Newman, " God's camp was," as he preached, " upon the outskirts of the world." What could a preacher do then but proclaim a transcendent order in

* For example, his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine,* whose positions are controlling in the movement of his own thought and which is perhaps his most constructive contribution to a philosophy of doctrine, is in germinal form in Sermon XV in *Oxford University Sermons.*

which the saved should establish their citizenship? Of that order here and now the church with her sacraments is witness and doorkeeper. Toward that order we must venture in faith and, since life is brief and time is fleeting, we must be desperately earnest in our desire to join the kingdom of the saints.

Such ruling ideas gave Newman a spacious region in which to move. He used ample themes: "The Kingdom of the Saints," "The Gospel a Trust," "The Church and the World," "The Christian Church an Imperial Power," "The Ventures of Faith," "The Mysteriousness of Our Present Being," "The Invisible World." I should think his use of such spacious themes, generally supported by apposite and sometimes original texts, began a new epoch in English and American preaching. While he can hardly be said to have originated the topical sermon, he certainly supplies an arresting illustration of its possibilities.

Newman preached entirely within the frame of the Christian year. Saints' days and feast days supply his points of departure. He brought their somewhat general suggestions into the main currents of life, often with surprising skill. He is at his best with the power and glory of the church or with the engagements of the human spirit with the flesh and the world, alone with God in the mystery and travail of the universe. What we now call the social note is not much in evidence, nor is the mystic note distinctly there. He rarely quotes and his illustrations are always biblical or ecclesiastical. He preached to a world whose subjective needs he knew marvelously but whose objective existence he seems often entirely to ignore. His homiletic influence would now be impossible to trace, though certain of his themes, like "The Ventures of Faith," have been passed from generation to generation of preachers.

No single Newman sermon will, I am persuaded, command a unanimous suffrage. The choice one makes depends upon

what one chooses for. The sermon "Wisdom and Innocence," which really released the Newman-Kingsley controversy and so eventually the *Apologia,* has, for example, outstanding historical significance. As a sermon it seems more innocent than wise and one would never in reading it anticipate its repercussions. But it concludes with an invocation which has become the best known and best loved of Newman's prayers, whose exquisite music is timeless. "The Second Spring" is rhetorically one of the finest of his sermons.

My own choice for this volume has been delicately balanced between "The Invisible World" and the first sermon on "The Kingdom of the Saints." These belong to his Anglican period, they represent fairly the quality of preaching upon which his fame rests, and they show the dominant conceptions in which he lived and out of which he preached. I have finally chosen "The Invisible World." For of that world Newman was a citizen and the tidings which he brought out of his apartness there were for him authentic.

THE INVISIBLE WORLD

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. II COR. 4:18

THERE ARE two worlds, "the visible and the invisible," as the creed speaks — the world we see, and the world we do not see; and the world which we do not see as really exists as the world we do see. It really exists, though we see it not. The world that we see we know to exist, *because* we see it. We have but to lift up our eyes and look around us, and we have proof of it; our eyes tell us. We see the sun, moon and stars, earth and sky, hills and valleys, woods and plains,

seas and rivers. And again, we see men, and the works of men. We see cities and stately buildings, and their inhabitants; men running to and fro, and busying themselves to provide for themselves and their families, or to accomplish great designs, or for the very business' sake. All that meets our eyes forms one world. It is an immense world; it reaches to the stars. Thousands on thousands of years might we speed up the sky, and though we were swifter than the light itself, we should not reach them all. They are at distances from us greater than any that is assignable. So high, so wide, so deep is the world; and yet it also comes near and close to us. It is everywhere; and it seems to leave no room for any other world.

And yet in spite of this universal world which we see, there is another world, quite as far-spreading, quite as close to us, and more wonderful; another world all around us, though we see it not, and more wonderful than the world we see, for this reason if for no other, that we do not see it. All around us are numberless objects, coming and going, watching, working or waiting, which we see not: this is that other world, which the eyes reach not unto, but faith only.

Let us dwell upon this thought. We are born into a world of sense; that is, of the real things which lie round about us, one great department comes to us, accosts us, through our bodily organs, our eyes, ears and fingers. We feel, hear and see them; and we know they exist, because we do thus perceive them. Things innumerable lie about us, animate and inanimate; but one particular class of these innumerable things is thus brought home to us through our senses. And moreover, while they act upon us, they make their presence known. We are sensible of them at the time, we are conscious that we perceive them. We not only see, but know that we see them; we not only hold intercourse, but know that we do. We are among men, and we know that we are. We feel cold and hunger; we know what sensible things remove them. We

eat, drink, clothe ourselves, dwell in houses, converse and act with others, and perform the duties of social life; and we feel vividly that we are doing so, while we do so. Such is our relation towards one part of the innumerable beings which lie around us. They act upon us, and we know it; and we act upon them in turn, and know we do.

But all this does not interfere with the existence of that other world which I speak of, acting upon us, yet not impressing us with the consciousness that it does so. It may as really be present and exert an influence as that which reveals itself to us. And that such a world there is, Scripture tells us. Do you ask what it is, and what it contains? I will not say that all that belongs to it is vastly more important than what we see, for among things visible are our fellow men, and nothing created is more precious and noble than a son of man. But still, taking the things which we see altogether, and the things we do not see altogether, the world we do not see is on the whole a much higher world than that which we do see. For, first of all, He is there who is above all beings, who has created all, before whom they all are as nothing, and with whom nothing can be compared.

Almighty God, we know, exists more really and absolutely than any of those fellow men whose existence is conveyed to us through the senses; yet we see him not, hear him not, we do but "feel after him," yet without finding him. It appears, then, that the things which are seen are but a part, and but a secondary part of the beings about us, were it only on this ground, that Almighty God, the Being of beings, is not in their number, but among "the things which are not seen." Once, and once only, for thirty-three years, has he condescended to become one of the beings which are seen, when he, the second person of the ever blessed Trinity, was, by an unspeakable mercy, born of the Virgin Mary into this sensible world. And then he was seen, heard, handled; he ate, he drank, he slept, he conversed, he went about, he acted as other

men; but excepting this brief period, his presence has never been perceptible; he has never made us conscious of his existence by means of our senses. He came, and he retired beyond the veil: and to us individually, it is as if he had never shown himself; we have as little sensible experience of his presence. Yet " he liveth evermore."

And in that other world are the souls also of the dead. They too, when they depart hence, do not cease to exist, but they retire from this visible scene of things; or, in other words, they cease to act towards us and before us *through our senses.* They live as they lived before; but that outward frame, through which they were able to hold communion with other men, is in some way, we know not how, separated from them, and dries away and shrivels up as leaves may drop off a tree. They remain, but without the usual means of approach towards us, and correspondence with us. As when a man loses his voice or hand, he still exists as before, but cannot any longer talk or write, or otherwise hold intercourse with us; so when he loses not voice and hand only, but his whole frame, or is said to die, there is nothing to show that he is gone, but we have lost our means of apprehending him.

Again: Angels also are inhabitants of the world invisible, and concerning them much more is told us than concerning the souls of the faithful departed, because the latter " rest from their labors "; but the angels are actively employed among us in the church. They are said to be " ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." No Christian is so humble but he has angels to attend on him, if he lives by faith and love. Though they are so great, so glorious, so pure, so wonderful, that the very sight of them (if we were allowed to see them) would strike us to the earth, as it did the prophet Daniel, holy and righteous as he was; yet they are our " fellow servants " and our fellow workers, and they carefully watch over and defend even the humblest of us, if we be Christ's. That they form a

part of our unseen world, appears from the vision seen by the patriarch Jacob. We are told that when he fled from his brother Esau, "he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun had set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep."

How little did he think that there was anything very wonderful in this spot! It looked like any other spot. It was a lone, uncomfortable place: there was no house there: night was coming on; and he had to sleep upon the bare rock. Yet how different was the truth! He saw but the world that is seen; he saw not the world that is not seen; yet the world that is not seen was there. It was there, though it did not at once make known its presence, but needed to be supernaturally displayed to him. He saw it in his sleep. "He dreamed, and behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached up to heaven; and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it." This was the other world. Now, let this be observed. Persons commonly speak as if the other world did not exist now, but would after death. No: it exists now, though we see it not. It is among us and around us. Jacob was shown this in his dream. Angels were all about him, though he knew it not. And what Jacob saw in his sleep, that Elisha's servant saw as if with his eyes; and the shepherds, at the time of the nativity, not only saw, but heard. They heard the voices of those blessed spirits who praise God day and night, and whom we, in our lower state of being, are allowed to copy and assist.

I

We are then in a world of spirits, as well as in a world of sense, and we hold communion with it, and take part in it, though we are not conscious of doing so. If this seems strange to anyone, let him reflect that we are undeniably taking part in a third world, which we do indeed see, but about which

we do not know more than about the angelic hosts — the world of brute animals. Can anything be more marvelous or startling, unless we were used to it, than that we should have a race of beings about us whom we do but see, and as little know their state, or can describe their interests, or their destiny, as we can tell of the inhabitants of the sun and moon? It is indeed a very overpowering thought, when we get to fix our minds on it, that we familiarly use, I may say hold intercourse with creatures who are as much strangers to us, as mysterious, as if they were the fabulous, unearthly beings, more powerful than man, and yet his slaves, which Eastern superstitions have invented.

We have more real knowledge about the angels than about the brutes. They have apparently passions, habits and a certain accountableness, but all is mystery about them. We do not know whether they can sin or not, whether they are under punishment, whether they are to live after this life. We inflict very great sufferings on a portion of them, and they in turn, every now and then, seem to retaliate upon us, as if by a wonderful law. We depend upon them in various important ways; we use their labor, we eat their flesh. This however relates to such of them as come near us: cast your thoughts abroad on the whole number of them, large and small, in vast forests, or in the water, or in the air; then say whether the presence of such countless multitudes, so various in their natures, so strange and wild in their shapes, living on the earth without ascertainable object, is not as mysterious as anything which Scripture says about the angels. Is it not plain to our senses that there is a world inferior to us in the scale of beings, with which we are connected without understanding what it is? And is it difficult to faith to admit the word of Scripture concerning our connection with a world superior to us?

When, indeed, persons feel it so difficult to conceive the existence among us of the world of spirits, because they are

not aware of it, they should recollect how many worlds all at once are in fact contained in human society itself. We speak of the political world, the scientific, the learned, the literary, the religious world; and suitably: for men are so closely united with some men, and so divided from others, they have such distant objects of pursuit one from another, and such distinct principles and engagements in consequence, that in one and the same place there exist together a number of circles or (as they may be called) worlds, made up of visible men, but themselves invisible, unknown, nay, unintelligible to each other. Men move about in the common paths of life, and look the same; but there is little community of feeling between them; each knows little about what goes on in any other sphere than his own; and a stranger coming into any neighborhood would, according to his own pursuits or acquaintances, go away with an utterly distinct or a reverse impression of it, viewed as a whole. Or again, leave for a while the political and commercial excitement of some large city and take refuge in a secluded village; and there, in the absence of news of the day, consider the mode of life and habits of mind, the employment and views of its inhabitants; and say whether the world, when regarded in its separate portions, is not more unlike itself than it is unlike the world of angels which Scripture places in the midst of it.

II

The world of spirits then, though unseen, is present, not future, not distant. It is not above the sky, it is not beyond the grave; it is now and here; the Kingdom of God is among us. Of this the text speaks. "We look," says St. Paul, "not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." You see he regarded it as a practical truth, which was to influence our conduct. Not only does he speak of the world invisible, but of the duty

of "looking at" it; not only does he contrast the things of time with it, but says that their belonging to time is a reason, not for looking at, but for looking off them. Eternity was not distant because it reached to the future; nor the unseen state without its influence on us, because it was impalpable. In like manner, he says in another Epistle, "Our conversation is in heaven." And again, "God hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." And again, "Your life is hid with Christ in God." And to the same purport are St. Peter's words, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." And again, St. Paul speaking of the apostles, "We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." And again in words already quoted, he speaks of the angels as "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."

Such is the hidden Kingdom of God; and, as it is now hidden, so in due season it shall be revealed. Men think that they are lords of the world, and may do as they will. They think this earth their property, and its movements in their power; whereas it has other lords besides them, and is the scene of a higher conflict than they are capable of conceiving. It contains Christ's little ones whom they despise, and his angels whom they disbelieve; and these at length shall take possession of it and be manifested. At present, "all things," to appearance, "continue as they were from the beginning of the creation"; and scoffers ask, "Where is the promise of his coming?" But at the appointed time there will be a "manifestation of the sons of God," and the hidden saints "shall shine out as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father." When the angels appeared to the shepherds it was a sudden appearance — "*Suddenly* there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host." How wonderful a sight! The night had before that seemed just like any other night; as the evening

on which Jacob saw the vision seemed like any other evening. They were keeping watch over their sheep; they were watching the night as it passed. The stars moved on — it was midnight. They had no idea of such a thing when the angel appeared. Such are the power and virtue hidden in things which are seen, and at God's will they are manifested. They were manifested for a moment to Jacob, for a moment to Elisha's servant, for a moment to the shepherds. They will be manifested forever when Christ comes at the Last Day " in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." Then this world will fade away and the other world will shine forth.

Let these be your thoughts, my brethren, especially in the spring season, when the whole face of nature is so rich and beautiful. Once only in the year, yet once, does the world which we see show forth its hidden powers, and in a manner manifest itself. Then the leaves come out, and the blossoms on the fruit trees and flowers; and the grass and corn spring up. There is a sudden rush and burst outwardly of that hidden life which God has lodged in the material world. Well, that shows you, as by a sample, what it can do at God's command, when he gives the word. This earth, which now buds forth in leaves and blossoms, will one day burst forth into a new world of light and glory, in which we shall see saints and angels dwelling. Who would think, except from his experience of former springs all through his life, who could conceive two or three months before, that it was possible that the face of nature, which then seemed so lifeless, should become so splendid and varied? How different is a tree, how different is a prospect, when leaves are on it and off it! How unlikely it would seem, before the event, that the dry and naked branches should suddenly be clothed with what is so bright and so refreshing! Yet in God's good time leaves come on the trees. The season may delay, but come it will at last. So it is with the coming of that eternal spring, for which all Christians are waiting. Come it will, though it delay; yet

though it tarry, let us wait for it, " because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

III

Therefore we say day by day, " Thy Kingdom come "; which means — O Lord, show Thyself; manifest Thyself; Thou that sittest between the cherubim, show Thyself; stir up Thy strength and come and help us. The earth that we see does not satisfy us; it is but a beginning; it is but a promise of something beyond it; even when it is gayest, with all its blossoms on, and shows most touchingly what lies hid in it, yet it is not enough. We know much more lies hid in it than we see. A world of saints and angels, a glorious world, the palace of God, the mountain of the Lord of Hosts, the heavenly Jerusalem, the throne of God and Christ, all these wonders, everlasting, all-precious, mysterious and incomprehensible, lie hid in what we see. What we see is the outward shell of an eternal Kingdom; and on that Kingdom we fix the eyes of our faith. Shine forth, O Lord, as when on Thy nativity, Thine angels visited the shepherds; let Thy glory blossom forth as bloom and foliage on the trees; change with Thy mighty power this visible world into that diviner world, which as yet we see not; destroy what we see, that it may pass and be transformed into what we believe. Bright as is the sun and the sky and the clouds; green as are the leaves and the fields; sweet as is the singing of the birds; we know that they are not all, and we will not take up with a part for the whole. They proceed from a center of love and goodness, which is God himself; but they are not his fullness; they speak of heaven, but they are not heaven; they are but as stray beams and dim reflections of his image; they are but crumbs from the table.

We are looking for the coming of the day of God, when all this outward world, fair though it be, shall perish; when the heavens shall be burnt and the earth melt away. We

can bear the loss, for we know it will be but the removing of a veil. We know that to remove the world which is seen, will be the manifestation of the world which is not seen. We know that what we see is as a screen hiding from us God and Christ, and his saints and angels. And we earnestly desire and pray for the dissolution of all that we see, from our longing after that which we do not see.

O blessed they indeed, who are destined for the sight of those wonders in which they now stand, at which they now look but which they do not recognize! Blessed they who shall at length behold what as yet mortal eye hath not seen and faith only enjoys! Those wonderful things of the new world are even now as they shall be then. They are immortal and eternal; and the souls who shall then be made conscious of them, will see them in their calmness and their majesty where they ever have been. But who can express the surprise and rapture which will come upon those, who then at last apprehend them for the first time, and to whose perceptions they are new! Who can imagine by a stretch of fancy the feelings of those who, having died in faith, wake up to enjoyment! The life then begun, we know, will last forever; yet surely if memory be to us then what it is now, that will be a day much to be observed unto the Lord through all the ages of eternity. We may increase indeed forever in knowledge and in love, still that first waking from the dead, the day at once our birth and our espousals, will ever be endeared and hallowed in our thoughts.

When we find ourselves after long rest gifted with fresh powers, vigorous with the seed of eternal life within us, able to love God as we wish, conscious that all trouble, sorrow, pain, anxiety, bereavement, is over forever, blessed in the full affection of those earthly friends whom we loved so poorly, and could protect so feebly, while they were with us in the flesh, and above all, visited by the immediate, visible, ineffable presence of God Almighty, with his only-begotten

Son our Lord Jesus Christ, and his co-equal, co-eternal Spirit, that great sight in which is the fullness of joy and pleasure forevermore — what deep, incommunicable, unimaginable thoughts will be then upon us! What depths will be stirred up within us! What secret harmonies awakened, of which human nature seemed incapable! Earthly words are indeed all worthless to minister to such high anticipations. Let us close our eyes and keep silence.

" All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever." *

* From *Parochial and Plain Sermons* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1897).

James Bowling Mozley

1813 — 1878

JAMES BOWLING MOZLEY was born at Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, England, September 15, 1813. He died at Shoreham, England, January 4, 1878. His father was a bookseller whose vocation very likely influenced the minds of his children. At any rate, three of the Mozleys lived and died as writers and theologians. Thomas wrote leaders for the *Times* for many years and during its most thunderous period. Anne wrote for the *Saturday Review* and edited two volumes of the *Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman.* James' career was wholly academic. He matriculated at Oriel in 1830 and became fellow of Magdalen in 1840. These were controversial years in the Anglican Church. All Oxford colleges were deeply under Newman's spell. They saw the beginning of the Tractarian movement, the rise, or else the renaissance, of the High Church party, deepening alienations between old friends, charges and countercharges, alarums and excursions.

As long as Newman remained within the Anglican communion, Mozley was his friend and helper, but he could not follow Newman into the Roman Church. He assisted Pusey in editing the Fathers and the High Church party in editing its religious journals. From 1856 till his death he had the living of Old Shoreham in Sussex. In 1868, for favors received, Gladstone made him a canon of Worcester, and in 1871 Regius professor of divinity at Oxford, to which distinguished chair he brought learning, piety, modesty, industry and " a mind of great and rare power." His lectures are said to have been stronger in matter than in delivery and his voluminous writings are not now likely much to be read.

But the very ecclesiastical station of such Anglican clergymen as Mozley fostered a type of preaching without which English homiletics would have been sadly impoverished. There is today nothing that quite parallels it. These clergymen lived more or less in academic seclusion, but they had their own sources of insight and understanding of life in those great ranges of human thought which possess a universal quality and can never be outdated. They were under no obligation in their turn as "Select Preachers" to fill St. Mary's or Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford. They preached out of much thought with gravity and weight and to their own peers. What they wrote was instinct with the ripened culture of colleges whose lovely buildings time had etched, whose enchanted gardens revealed centuries of care, whose traditions continued the finest in English life, learning and literature and furnished the preacher as he stood in his high pulpit the restraining and inspiring fellowship of a noble past.

Mozley's sermon "The Reversal of Human Judgment" has by general suffrage been acclaimed one of the greatest sermons of the nineteenth century. I have omitted two or three long paragraphs which illustrate the preacher's remarkable faculty of detailed analysis. But the larger content and strong movement are here.

THE REVERSAL OF HUMAN JUDGMENT

Many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first. MATT. 19:30

PERHAPS there is hardly any person of reflection to whom the thought has not occurred at times, of the final judgment turning out to be a great subversion of human estimates of men. Society forms its opinions of men, and places some on a high pinnacle; they are favorites with it, religious and

moral favorites. Such judgments are a necessary and proper part of the present state of things; they are so, quite independently of the question whether they are true or not; it is proper that there should be this sort of expression of the voice of the day; the world is not nothing, because it is transient; it must judge and speak upon such evidence as it has, and is capable of seeing. Therefore those characters of men are by all means to be respected by us, as members of this world; they have their place, they are part of the system.

But does the idea strike us of some enormous subversion of human judgments in the next world; some vast rectification to realize which now, even if we could, would not be good for us? Such an idea would not be without support from some of those characteristic prophetic sayings of our Lord, which, like the slanting strokes of the sun's rays across the clouds, throw forward a track of mysterious light athwart the darkness of the future. Such is that saying in which a shadow of the eternal judgment seems to come over us — "Many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." It is impossible to read this saying without an understanding that it was intended to throw an element of wholesome skepticism into the present estimate of human character, and to check the idolatry of the human heart which lifts up its favorites with as much of self-complacency as of enthusiasm, and in its worship of others flatters itself.

Indeed, this language of Scripture, which speaks of the subversion of human judgments in another world, comes in connection with another language with which it most remarkably fits in, language which speaks very decidedly of a great deception of human judgments in this world. It is observable that the gospel prophecy of the earthly future of Christianity is hardly what we should have expected it beforehand to be; there is a great absence of brightness in it; the sky is overcast with clouds, and birds of evil omen fly to and fro; there is an agitation of the air, as if dark elements were at work in

it; or it is as if a fog rose up before our eyes, and treacherous lights were moving to and fro in it, which we could not trust.

Prophecy would fain presage auspiciously, but as soon as she casts her eye forward, her note saddens, and the chords issue in melancholy and sinister cadences which depress the hearer's mind. And what is the burden of her strain? It is this. As soon as ever Christianity is cast into the world to begin its history, that moment there begins a great deception. It is a pervading thought in gospel prophecy — the extraordinary capacity for deceiving and being deceived that would arise under the gospel; it is spoken of as something peculiar in the world. There are to be false Christs and false prophets, false signs and wonders; many that will come in Christ's name, saying, I am Christ, and deceive many; so that it is the parting admonition of Christ to his disciples — "Take heed, lest any man deceive you" — as if that would be the great danger. And this great quantity of deception was to culminate in that one in whom all power of signs and lying wonders should reside, even that Antichrist, who as God should sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Thus before the true Christ was known to the world, the prophecy of the false one was implanted deep in the heart of Christianity.

I

When we come to the explanation of this mass of deception as it applies to the Christian society, and the conduct of Christians, we find that it consists of a great growth of specious and showy effects, which will in fact issue out of Christianity, not implying sterling goodness. Christianity will act as a great excitement to human nature, it will communicate a great impulse, it will move and stir man's feelings and intellect; this impulse will issue in a great variety of high gifts and activities, much zeal and ardor. But this brilliant manifestation will be to a large extent lacking in the substance of the Christian character. It will be a great show. That is to say, there will

be underneath it the deceitful human heart — the *natura callida,* as Thomas à Kempis calls it, *quae se semper pro fine habet.*

We have even in the early Christian church that specious display of gifts which put aside as secondary the more solid part of religion, and which St. Paul had so strongly to check. Gospel prophecy goes remarkably in this direction, as to what Christianity would do in the world; that it would not only bring out the truth of human nature, but would, like some powerful alchemy, elicit and extract the falsehood of it; that it would not only develop what was sincere and sterling in man, but what was counterfeit in him too. Not that Christianity favors falsehood, any more than the Law favored sin because it brought out sin.

The Law, as St. Paul says, brought out sin *because* it was spiritual, and forced sin to be sin against light. So in the case of Christianity. If a very high, pure and heart-searching religion is brought into contact with a corrupt nature, the nature grasps at the greatness of the religion, but will not give up itself; yet to unite the two requires a self-deception the more subtle and potent in proportion to the purity of the religion. And certainly, comparing the hypocrisy of the Christian with that of the old world, we see that the one was a weak production in comparison with the other, which is indeed a very powerful creation; throwing itself into feeling and language with an astonishing freedom and elasticity, and possessing wonderful spring and largeness.

There is, however, one very remarkable utterance of our Lord himself upon this subject, which deserves special attention. " Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you." Now this is a very remarkable prophecy, for one reason, that in the very first start of Christianity, upon the very threshold of its en-

trance into the world, it looks *through* its success and universal reception, into an ulterior result of that victory — a counterfeit profession of it. It sees before the first nakedness of its birth is over, a prosperous and flourishing religion, which it is worth while for others to pay homage to, because it reflects credit on its champions. Our Lord anticipates the time when active zeal for himself will be no guarantee.

And we may observe the difference between Christ and human founders. The latter are too glad of any zeal in their favor, to examine very strictly the tone and quality of it. They grasp at it at once; not so our Lord. He does not want it even for himself, unless it is pure in the individual. But this statement of our Lord's is principally important, as being a prophecy relating to the earthly future of Christianity. It places before us public religious leaders, men of influence in the religious world, who spread and push forward by gifts of eloquence and powers of mind, the truths of his religion, whom yet he will not accept, because of a secret corruptness in the aim and spirit with which they did their work. The prophecy puts before us the fact of a great deal of work being done in the church, and outwardly good and zealous work, upon the same motive in substance, upon which worldly men do their work in the world; and stamps it as the activity of corrupt nature. The rejection of this class of religious workers is complete, although they have been, as the language itself declares, forward and active for spiritual objects, and not only had them on their lips.

II

Here then we have a remarkable subversion of human judgments in the next world foretold by our Lord himself; for those men certainly come forward with established religious characters to which they appeal; they have no doubt of their position in God's Kingdom, and they speak with the air of men whose claims have been acquiesced in by others, and

by numbers. And thus a false Christian growth is looked to in gospel prophecy, which will be able to meet even the religious tests of the current day, and sustain its pretensions, but which will not satisfy the tests of the last day. We are then perhaps at first sight surprised at the sternness of their sentence, and are ready to say with the trembling disciple — "Who then shall be saved?" But when we reflect upon it, we shall see that it is not more than what meets the case; i.e., that we know of sources of error in the estimate of human character which will account for great mistakes being made; which mistakes will have to be rectified.

One source of mistake then is, that while the gospel keeps to one point in its classification of men — viz., the motive, by which alone it decides their character, the mass of men in fact find it difficult to do so. They have not that firm hold of the moral idea which prevents them from wandering from it, and being diverted by irrelevant considerations, they think of the spirituality of a man as belonging to the department to which he is attached, the profession he makes, the subject matter he works upon, the habitual language he has to use. The sphere of these men, of whom the estimate was to be finally reversed, was a religious one — viz., the church, and this was a remarkable prop to them.

Now, with respect to this, it must be observed that the church is undoubtedly in its design a spiritual society, but it is also a society of this world as well; and it depends upon the inward motive of a man whether it is to him a spiritual society or a worldly one. The church as soon as ever it is embodied in a visible collection or society of men, who bring into it human nature, with human influences, regards, points of view, estimates, aims and objects — I say the church, from the moment it thus embodies itself in a human society, *is* the world. Individual souls in it convert into reality the high professed principles of the body, but the active stock of motives in it are the motives of human nature. Can the visible

church indeed afford to do without these motives? Of course it cannot. It must do its work by means of these to a great extent, just as the world does its work. Religion itself is beautiful and heavenly, but the machinery for it is very like the machinery for anything else. I speak of the apparatus for conducting and administering the visible system of it. Is not the machinery for all causes and objects much the same, communication with others, management, contrivance, combination, adaptation of means to end?

Religion then is itself a painful struggle, but religious machinery provides as pleasant a form of activity as any other machinery possesses; and it calls forth and exercises much the same kind of talents and gifts that the machinery of any other department does, that of a government office, or a public institution, or a large business. The church as a part of the world must have active-minded persons to conduct its policy and affairs; which persons must, by their very situation, connect themselves with spiritual subjects, as being the subjects of the society; they must express spiritual joys, hopes and fears, apprehensions, troubles, trials, aims and wishes. These are topics which belong to the church as a department. A religious society then, or religious sphere of action, or religious sphere of subjects, is irrelevant as regards the spirituality of the individual person, which is a matter of inward motive.

To take an instance of a motive of this world. Statesmen and leaders of political parties may of course act upon a spiritual motive in their work, and have done so; viz., the single desire to do good in the sphere of God's temporal providence; and the motive of their work may stand on a perfect equality with that of winning souls; nevertheless the world's great men do often act upon a known class of secondary motives. Dismissing then the grosser and coarser class of selfish aims, which conspicuously and glaringly put the religious and secular worker on a level, so far as they adopt them, let us take that absorbing frailty, which sometimes figures as a virtue.

You see in the case of a political man all the action of life, all its vital energy gathering round himself, and accumulating into a kind of egotistic capital, which is advancing and growing, as life and action go on — a representation of the man to himself, which goes by the name of greatness or glory; an ever accompanying mirror into which he looks for his stimulus and inspiration.

This great abstraction, this reflection and adumbration of himself, as it magnifies, becomes his one measure, it gives the worth to everything he does; whatever swells the bulk of this colossal impersonation is valuable, whatever does not is indifferent to him. It wholly empties and depopulates the simple and pure region of motive, until it stands alone within the man, draining all the freshness of his spirit, and drying up the sap of nature, till he only feels one wish which can speak to him. Everything is grudged which does not feed this fount. Natural interests die, even the impress of personal attachments fades away; whatever is outside the central impulse is in the way; he does not want it, he can do without it; everything else is only instrumental to this one devouring end.

If this great phantom which represents himself is growing, all is right; it *must* be growing to the last; it is a duty, the first of duties, the sum of all duty, the final cause of his being, and his conscience is pricked if he misses any opportunity of an accession to this mystic treasury, this chamber of imagery within him. Nor is the fault only one of gigantic minds; we may see that even ordinary men are sometimes taken up with creating a smaller sample of this personification. But what substantial difference is there in this class of motives as they act upon a religious leader, and as they act upon a political leader? The former, if he is of an ambitious mind, has the *same kind of* ambition that the other has; he wants success, and the spread of his own principles and his own following is his success.

III

Is there not as much human glory in the brilliant summit of religious proselytism, as in the triumph of a certain set of political principles? Is it not a temporal, an earthly, and a worldly reward to be called Rabbi, Rabbi? Christ said it was. If then one of the great critics of men could speak of "the muddy source of the luster of public actions," the scrutiny may be carried as well to a religious as a political sphere. The truth is, wherever there is action, effort, aim at certain objects and ends — wherever the flame of human energy mounts up; all this may gather either round a center of pure and unselfish desire, or round a center of egotism; and no superiority in the subject of the work can prevent the lapse into the inferior motive. In the most different fields of objects this may be the same: it is a quality of the individual. Whatever he does, if there is a degeneracy in the temper of his mind, it all collects and gathers, by a false direction which it receives from the false center of attraction, *round himself.*

The subject or cause which a man takes up makes no difference. The religious leader can feel, alike with the political, and as strongly, this lower source of inspiration; can be accompanied by this idolized representation of self, this mirror in which he sees himself growing and expanding in life's area. Are the keen relish for success, the spirit which kindles at human praise, and the gusts of triumph — the feelings which accompany action upon a theater, guaranteed no place in a man, by his having religious zeal? These are parts of human nature, and it is not zeal but something else which purifies human nature. So far as religion only supplies a man of keen earthly susceptibilities, and desire of a place in the world, with a subject or an arena, so far that man stands on the same ground with a politician who is stimulated by this aim. They are the same identical type of men in different spheres. There is a conventional difference between them,

but there is one moral heading. Both may be doing valuable work, important service in a public sense; but if you do not think the politician a spiritual man because he is a useful man, no more must you think the active man in the religious sphere to be so. Spirituality belongs to the motive. . . .

It must be observed, however, that the gospel has, with that penetration which belongs to it, extended the province and field of human pride from direct self, to self, as indirectly touched and affected by the success of party, or school, or cause. We see this extension of the signification of the vice implied in Christ's denunciation of the proselytism of the Pharisees — that they compassed heaven and earth to make one disciple: because if pride only applied to what exalted a man's self directly or personally, the Pharisee might have replied — " I have no private interest in the propagation of the doctrines of my school; it is no profit to myself personally; I only devote myself to it because the propagation of religious truth, or that which we believe to be such, is a duty, and if we value our own belief we must be animated by the wish to impart it to others. We must be zealous in winning over others to our own sect, provided we believe in the creed and principles of our sect, which we show we do by belonging to it."

The Pharisee might have said this; but our Lord saw in the Pharisee an aim which was not selfish in a direct sense; but which still indirectly, and on that account not the less strongly, touched the proud self of the Pharisee. His rebuke recognizes and proclaims a relation to truth itself in man, which may be a selfish one. It was a new teaching, a disclosure beneath the surface. Truth is an article of tangible value, it gives conscious rank to its possessors, it gives them the position of success in the highest department — viz., that of the reason and judgment; while to miss getting it is failure in that department. Man can thus fight for truth as a piece of property, not upon a generous principle, but because his idea

of truth — the correctness or falsity of that idea — tests his own victory or failure. And his way of fighting for it is spreading it. Its gaining ground, its being embraced by numbers, ratifies his own decision. Thus a selfish appreciation of truth, and not the motive of charity only, is able to lead to efforts for its propagation; and there is such a thing as corrupt proselytism, the eager desire to get hold of other minds representing the false relations to truth, and not the simple and disinterested ones.

Proselytizing pharisaism is the first shadow of that great manifestation of the tyrannical aspect of truth, or man's idea of truth which afterwards became so terrible a distortion of Christianity. Deep concern for human souls would never have produced spiritual despotism or persecution; it was a selfish relation to truth to begin with which produced these; it was the lapse of the human heart from charity to pride in the matter. The vindictive punishment of error did not arise from the sense of value of truth, but from men holding truth, or their idea of it, as a selfish treasure; contrary opinions threatened their hold of this treasure: its forced acceptance rooted them in possession of it. The propagation of truth became the pride of dominion over souls.

IV

One would not, of course, exclude from the sphere of religion the motive of *esprit de corps:* it is undoubtedly a great stimulus, and in its measure is consistent with all simplicity and singleness of heart; but in an intense form, when the individual is absorbed in a blind obedience to a body, it corrupts the quality of religion; it ensnares the man in a kind of self-interest; and he sees in the success of the body the reflection of himself. It becomes an egotistic motive. There has been certainly an immense produce from it; but the type of religion it has produced is a deflection from simplicity; it may possess striking and powerful qualities, but it is not like the

free religion of the heart; and there is that difference between the two, which there is between what comes from a second-hand source and from the fountainhead. It has not that naturalness (in the highest sense) which alone gives beauty to religion. . . .

Nothing is easier, when we take gifts of the intellect and imagination in the abstract, than to see that these do not constitute moral goodness. This is indeed a mere truism; and yet, in the concrete, it is impossible not to see how nearly they border upon counting as such; to what advantage they set off any moral good there may be in a man; sometimes even supplying the absence of real good with what looks extremely like it. On paper these mental gifts are a mere string of terms; we see exactly what these terms denote, and we cannot mistake it for something else. It is plain that eloquence, imagination, poetical talent, are no more moral goodness than riches are, or than health and strength are, or than noble birth is. We know that bad men have possessed them just as much as good men.

Nevertheless, take them in actual life, in the actual effect and impression they make, as they express a man's best moods and highest perceptions and feelings, and what a wonderful likeness and image of what is moral do they produce. Think of the effect of refined power of expression, of a keen and vivid imagination as applied to the illustration and enrichment of moral subjects — to bringing out, e.g., with the whole force of intellectual sympathy, the delicate and high regions of character — does not one who can do this seem to have all the goodness which he expresses? And it is quite possible he may have; but this does not prove it. There is nothing more in this than the faculty of imagination and intellectual appreciation of moral things. There enters thus unavoidably often into a great religious reputation a good deal which is not religion but power. . . .

Gifts of intellect and imagination, poetical power, and the

like, are indeed in themselves a department of worldly prosperity. It is a very narrow vein of prosperity that consists only in having property: gifts of a certain kind are just as much worldly property as riches; nor are they less so if they belong to a religious man, any more than riches are less prosperity because a religious man is rich. We call these gifts worldly prosperity, because they are in themselves a great advantage, and create success, influence, credit, and all which man so much values; and at the same time they are not moral goodness, because the most corrupt men may have them.

But even the gifts of outward fortune themselves have much of the effect of gifts of mind in having the semblance of something moral. They set off what goodness a man has to such immense advantage, and heighten the effect of it. Take some well disposed person, and suppose him suddenly to be left an enormous fortune, he would feel himself immediately so much better a man. He would seem to himself to become suddenly endowed with a new largeheartedness and benevolence. He would picture himself the generous patron, the large dispenser of charity, the promoter of all good in the world. The power to become such would look like a new disposition. And in the eyes of others too, his goodness would appear to have taken a fresh start. Even serious piety is recognized more as such; it is brought out and placed in high relief, when connected with outward advantages; and so the gifts of fortune become a kind of moral addition to a man.

V

Action then, on a large scale, and the overpowering effect of great gifts, are what produce, in a great degree, what we call the canonization of men — the popular judgment which sets them up morally and spiritually upon the pinnacle of the temple, and which professes to be a forestallment, through the mouth of the church or of religious society, of the final judgment. How decisive is the world's, and, not less confi-

dent, the visible church's note of praise. It is just that trumpet note which does not bear a doubt. How it is trusted! With what certainty it speaks! How large a part of the world's and church's voice is praise! It is an immense and ceaseless volume of utterance. And by all means let man praise man, and not do it grudgingly either; let there be an echo of that vast action which goes on in the world, provided we only speak of what we know. But if we begin to speak of what we do not know, and which only a higher judgment can decide, we are going beyond our province.

On this question we are like men who are deciding irreversibly on some matter in which everything depends upon one element in the case, which element they cannot get at. We appear to know a great deal of one another, and yet if we reflect, what a vast system of secrecy the moral world is. How low down in a man sometimes (not always) lies the fundamental motive which sways his life! But this is what everything depends on. Is it an unspiritual motive? Is there some keen passion connected with this world at the bottom? Then it corrupts the whole body of action. There is a good deal of prominent religion then, which keeps up its character, even when this motive betrays itself; great gifts fortify it, and people do not see because they will not. But at any rate there is a vast quantity of religious position which has this one great point undecided beneath it; and we know of tremendous dangers to which it is exposed.

Action upon a theater may doubtless be as simple-minded action as any other; it has often been; it has been often even childlike action; the apostles acted on a theater; they were a spectacle to men and to angels. Still what dangers in a spiritual point of view does it ordinarily include — dangers to simplicity, inward probity, sincerity! How does action on this scale and of this kind seem, notwithstanding its religious object, to pass over people not touching one of their faults, leaving — more than their infirmities — the dark veins of

evil in their character as fixed as ever. How will persons sacrifice themselves to their objects! They would benefit the world, it would appear, at their own moral expense; but this is a kind of generosity which is perilous policy for the soul, and is indeed the very mint in which the great mass of false spiritual coinage is made.

On the other hand, while the open theater of spiritual power and energy is so accessible to corrupt motives, which, though undermining its truthfulness, leave standing all the brilliance of the outer manifestation; let it be considered what a strength and power of goodness may be accumulating in unseen quarters. The way in which man bears temptation is what decides his character; yet how secret is the system of temptation! Who knows what is going on? What the real ordeal has been? What its issue was? So with respect to the trial of griefs and sorrows, the world is again a system of secrecy. There is something particularly penetrating, and which strikes home in those disappointments which are specially not extraordinary, and make no show.

What comes naturally and as a part of our situation has a probing force grander strokes have not; there is a solemnity and stateliness in these, but the blow which is nearest to common life gets the stronger hold. Is there any particular event which seems to have, if we may say so, a kind of malice in it which provokes the Manichaean feeling in our nature, it is something which we should have a difficulty in making appear to anyone else, any special trial. Compared with this inner grasp of some stroke of Providence, voluntary sacrifice stands outside of us. After all the self-made trial is a poor disciplinarian weapon; there is a subtle masterly irritant and provoking point in the genuine natural trial, and in the natural crossness of events, which the artificial thing cannot manage; we can no more make our trials then we can make our feelings.

In this way moderate deprivations are in some cases more

difficult to bear than extreme ones. "I can bear total obscurity," says Pascal, "well enough; what disgusts me is semi-obscurity; I can make an idol of the whole, but no great merit of the half." And so it is often the case that what we *must* do as simply right, and, which would not strike even ourselves, and still less anybody else, is just the hardest thing to do. A work of supererogation would be much easier. All this points in the direction of great work going on under common outsides where it is not noticed; it hints at a secret sphere of growth and progress; and as such it is an augury and presage of a harvest which may come some day suddenly to light, which human judgments had not counted on.

It is upon such a train of thought as this which has been passing through our minds, that we raise ourselves to the reception of that solemn sentence which Scripture has inscribed on the curtain which hangs down before the judgment seat — "The first shall be last; and the last shall be first." The secrets of the tribunal are guarded, and yet a finger points which seems to say — "Beyond, in this direction, behind this veil, things are different from what you will have looked for."

VI

Suppose, e.g., any supernatural judge should appear in the world now, and it is evident that the scene he would create would be one to startle us; we should not soon be used to it; it would look strange; it would shock and appall; and that from no other cause than simply its reductions; that it presented characters stripped bare, denuded of what was irrelevant to goodness, and only with their moral substance left. The judge would take no cognizance of a rich imagination, power of language, poetical gifts, and the like, in themselves, as parts of goodness, any more than he would of richness and prosperity; and the moral residuum left would appear perhaps a bare result. The first look of divine justice would strike us as injustice; it would be too pure a justice for us; we should

be long in reconciling ourselves to it. Justice would appear, like the painter's gaunt skeleton of emblematic meaning, to be stalking through the world, smiting with attenuation luxuriating forms of virtue.

Forms, changed from what we knew, would meet us, strange unaccustomed forms, and we should have to ask them who they were — "You were flourishing but a short while ago, what has happened to you now?" And the answer, if it spoke the truth, would be — "Nothing, except that now, much which lately counted as goodness, counts as such no longer; we are tried by a new moral measure, out of which we issue different men; gifts which have figured as goodness remain as gifts, but cease to be goodness." Thus would the large sweep made of human canonizations act like blight or volcanic fire upon some rich landscape, converting the luxury of nature into a dried-up scene of bare stems and scorched vegetation.

So may the scrutiny of the Last Day, by discovering the irrelevant material in men's goodness, reduce to a shadow much exalted earthly character. Men are made up of professions, gifts and talents, and also of themselves, but all so mixed together that we cannot separate one element from another; but another day must show what the moral substance is, and what is only the brightness and setting off of gifts. On the other hand, the same day may show where, though the setting off of gifts is less, the substance is more. If there will be reversal of human judgment for evil, there will be reversal of it for good too. The solid work which has gone on in secret, under common exteriors, will then spring into light, and come out in a glorious aspect. Do we not meet with surprises of this kind here, which look like auguries of a greater surprise in the next world, a surprise on a vast scale?

Those who have lived under an exterior of rule, when they come to a trying moment sometimes disappoint us; they are not equal to the act required from them; because their forms

of duty, whatever they are, have not touched in reality their deeper fault of character, meanness, or jealousy, or the like, but have left them where they were; they have gone on thinking themselves good because they did particular things, and used certain language, and adopted certain ways of thought, and have been utterly unconscious all the time of a corroding sin within them. On the other hand, someone who did not promise much, comes out at a moment of trial strikingly and favorably.

This is a surprise then which sometimes happens, nay, and sometimes a greater surprise still, when out of the eater comes forth meat, and out of a state of sin there springs the soul of virtue. The act of the thief on the cross is a surprise. Up to the time when he was judged he was a thief, and from a thief he became a saint. For even in the dark labyrinth of evil there are unexpected outlets; sin is established by habit in the man, but the good principle which is in him also, but kept down and suppressed, may be secretly growing too; it may be undermining it, and extracting the life and force from it. In this man then, sin becomes more and more, though holding its place by custom, an outside and coating, just as virtue does in the deteriorating man, till at last, by a sudden effort and the inspiration of an opportunity, the strong good casts off the weak crust of evil and comes out free. We witness a conversion.

VII

But this is a large and mysterious subject — the foundation for high virtue to become apparent in a future world, which hardly rises up above the ground here. We cannot think of the enormous trial which is undergone in this world by vast masses without the thought also of some sublime fruit to come of it some day. True, it may not emerge from the struggle of bare endurance here, but has not the seed been sown? Think of the burden of toil and sorrow borne by the crowds of poor; we know that pain does not of itself make people good; but

what we observe is, that even in those in whom the trial seems to do something, it yet seems such a failure. What inconstancy, violence, untruths! The pathos in it all moves you. What a tempest of character it is! And yet when such trial has been passed we involuntarily say — has not a foundation been laid?

And so in the life of a soldier, what agonies must nature pass through in it. While the present result of such trial is so disappointing, so little seems to come of it! Yet we cannot think of what has been gone through by countless multitudes in war, of the dreadful altar of sacrifice, and the lingering victims, without the involuntary idea arising that in some, even of the irregular and undisciplined, the foundation of some great purification has been laid. We hear sometimes of single remarkable acts of virtue, which spring from minds in which there is not the habit of virtue. Such acts point to a foundation, a root of virtue in man, deeper than habit; they are sudden leaps which show an unseen spring in a man, which are able to compress in a moment the growth of years.

To conclude. The gospel language throws doubt upon the final stability of much that passes current here with respect to character, upon established judgments, and the elevations of the outward sanctuary. It lays down a wholesome skepticism. We do not do justice to the spirit of the gospel by making it enthusiastic simply, or even benevolent simply. It is sagacious, too. It is a book of judgment. Man is judged in it. Our Lord is judge. We cannot separate our Lord's divinity from his humanity; and yet we must be blind if we do not see a great judicial side of our Lord's human character — that severe type of understanding, in relation to the worldly man, which has had its imperfect representation in great human minds. He was unspeakably benevolent, kind, compassionate; true, but he was a judge. It was indeed of his very completeness as man that he should know man; and to know is to judge. He must be blind who, in the significant acts and

sayings of our Lord, as they unroll themselves in the pregnant page of the Gospel, does not thus read his character; he sees it in that insight into pretensions, exposure of motives, laying bare of disguises; in the sayings — "Believe it not"; "Take heed that no man deceive you"; "Behold I have told you"; in all that profoundness of reflection in regard to man which great observing minds among mankind have shown, though accompanied by much of frailty, anger, impatience or melancholy. His human character is not benevolence only; there is in it wise distrust — that moral sagacity which belongs to the perfection of man.

Now then, as has been said, this skepticism with regard to human character has, as a line of thought, had certain well known representatives in great minds, who have discovered a root of selfishness in men's actions, have probed motives, extracted aims, and placed man before himself denuded and exposed; they judged him, and in the frigid sententiousness or the wild force of their utterances, we hear that of which we cannot but say — how true! But knowledge is a goad to those who have it; a disturbing power; a keenness which distorts; and in the light it gives it partly blinds also. The fault of these minds was that in exposing evil they did not really believe in goodness; goodness was to them but an airy ideal — the dispirited echo of perplexed hearts — returned to them from the rocks of the desert, without bearing hope with it.

They had no genuine belief in any world which was different from theirs; they availed themselves of an ideal indeed to judge this world, and they could not have judged it without; for anything, whatever it is, is good, if we have no idea of anything better; and therefore the conception of a good world was necessary to judge the bad one. But the ideal held loose to their minds — not as anything to be substantiated, not as a type in which a real world was to be cast, not as anything of structural power, able to gather into it, form round it, and build up upon itself; not, in short, as anything of power at all,

able to make anything, or do anything, but only like some fragrant scent in the air, which comes and goes, loses itself, returns again in faint breaths, and rises and falls in imperceptive waves. Such was goodness to these minds; it was a dream.

But the gospel distrust is not disbelief in goodness. It raises a great suspense indeed, it shows a curtain not yet drawn up, it checks weak enthusiasm, it appends a warning note to the pomp and flattery of human judgments, to the erection of idols; and points to a day of great reversal; a day of the Lord of Hosts; the day of pulling down and plucking up, of planting and building. But, together with the law of sin, the root of evil in the world, and the false goodness in it, it announces a fount of true natures; it tells us of a breath of heaven of which we know not whence it cometh and whither it goeth; which inspires single individual hearts, that spring up here and there, and everywhere, like broken gleams of the Supreme Goodness. And it recognizes in the renewed heart of man an instinct which can discern true goodness and distinguish it from false; a secret discrimination in the good by which they know the good. It does not therefore stand in the way of that natural and quiet reliance which we are designed by God to have in one another, and that trust in those whose hearts we know. "Wisdom is justified of her children"; "My sheep hear my voice, but a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers." *

* From *University Sermons* (London: Rivington & Co., 1886).

Henry Ward Beecher

1813 — 1887

HENRY WARD BEECHER was born in Litchfield, Connecticut, June 24, 1813. He died in Brooklyn, New York, March 8, 1887. Thus his ministry covers the most distinctive and creative decades of the nineteenth century and reflects the fascinating sequences of its political, social, scientific and theological history. The century belonged, predominantly, to the English-speaking peoples. From Waterloo to Sedan England shifted as she pleased the weights in the European balance of power. During the whole of the century, the United States demonstrated in the western hemisphere the triumph of democracy and of other forces less praiseworthy. For almost forty years Beecher, preaching from the platform of a "tabernacle," with no pictured windows nor any symbolism nor any architectural excellence save the perfect acoustics which made it possible for him to whisper to three thousand people, spoke to the English-speaking world.

His printed sermons were circulated everywhere. He was in demand on lecture platforms on both sides of the Atlantic. For a brief period he was editor-in-chief of the *Independent,* then the most influential religious periodical in the United States. He was later editor-in-chief of the *Christian Union* which, still later, under the brilliant direction of Lyman Abbott, became the *Outlook.* He did not inaugurate the Abolitionist movement but he became its most powerful supporter — and not entirely by pacific methods. He sold a slave girl at auction in the Tabernacle to purchase her freedom. He threw slave chains upon his pulpit platform to dramatize his abhorrence of the system. He took part in the political

controversies of the embittered decade before the Civil War and drew down upon his leonine head tempests of hatred and acclaim. He supported the cause of the Union before hostile audiences in the great British textile and labor centers, and whether or not he turned the tides of British opinion, he wrote an unforgettable scene into the drama of his own life and bequeathed to all lovers of noble speech some of the most superb passages in oratory.

But he was first and last and continuously a preacher. He had " everything it takes." He shared the inherited genius of the Beecher family. He had a physique nothing could tire. His massive head was set upon broad shoulders by a neck whose ample vessels made it possible for his visceral force to flood his brain with the blood which sometimes ominously flushed his face. He had a voice, studiously cultivated, with an organ-like range. He had every art of the actor, every instinct of the dramatist, imagination, wit, humor, and a marvelous faculty to draw his illustrations from the familiar things of life. He played upon the great chords of human emotion, as apt to evoke laughter as tears.

Theologically he inherited the evangelical tradition of free-church Protestantism, mediated through the modified Calvinism of his father. That was his point of departure, and the most unkind psychological study of him ever written * maintains that he never escaped his father's dominance but fought it to the end in his own divided personality. (Which may, though to a far less degree than Hibben holds, be true.) He dates his own conversion from an experience in the Ohio woods above Cincinnati where, he says, " it pleased God to reveal to my wandering soul . . . that he was a Being not made mad by sin, but sorry . . . in short that he felt toward me as my mother . . . to whose eyes my wrongdoing brought tears, who never pressed me so close to her heart as when I

* Paxton Hibben's *Henry Ward Beecher, An American Portrait* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1927).

had done wrong, and who would fain with her yearning love lift me out of trouble." *

With endless modulations but no basic modification, Beecher preached that conviction till he died. It is not easy to say now how widely he thus reached and how profoundly he influenced American preaching. Abbott says, substantially, that he found Christian faith bowing awe-struck before Sinai and left it bowed in love before Calvary. It is impossible in a sketch like this to indicate the range of his preaching, and yet its field was definite. "The Love of God," "The Fatherhood of God," "The Lights and Shadows," "Joys and Sorrows of Life," "The Christian Evangel" — these furnished him his themes. His preaching was what we call "Christ-centered," a time-worn phrase which was not time-worn then. His preaching bore centrally on life and conduct.

Sometimes he was poet, sometimes prophet, sometimes he scourged and more often he healed. When he drew out all his stops and used the great organ, he had a power, as a friend once said who heard him, "to make your hair stand on end." He was independent, fearless and open-minded. He created a church which outlasted storms that would have shaken a fellowship less organically united, and he maintained his supremacy to the end.

If, as Dr. George A. Gordon said, his afternoon sun had not had to battle its way through clouds to its setting, his career would have been sovereign in every element of power in the history of the Christian pulpit. As it was, that sun conquered the clouds and there was for him light at eventide.

It is impossible to select one of Beecher's sermons and call it the greatest. I have therefore, to the exclusion of many whose claims are equally valid, chosen a sermon on "The Gentleness of God," preached in Plymouth Church on Sunday morning, October 9, 1859. I have chosen this because

* Lyman Abbott, *Henry Ward Beecher* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1903), p. 2.

it seems typical of his most distinctive gospel, and because in it he speaks out of his splendid and mature manhood. His prayers were as wonderful as his sermons. Many have thought them the true uncovering of his own seeking soul. I have here and there left out a paragraph of the sermon which in no wise affects its message, to make room for the prayer which followed it.

THE GENTLENESS OF GOD

Now I, Paul, myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ. II COR. 10:1

AMONG ALL the motives which (in turn) are addressed to men, in dissuasion from evil and persuasion to good, none seems more impressive and touching than that of God's generosity. Authority, command, sublime threatening, sentence and judicial penalty — all these seem natural to supremacy. But personal kindness, tenderness of feeling, gentleness and benignity, as motives to obedience, are not possible under constitutional governments, which are not governments by arbitrary monarchs, but of laws and constitutions — abstract and without feeling. The divine government, on the contrary, is personal. In human governments men represent institutions and laws. Exactly the reverse is true in the divine government: laws and institutions represent a person — God.

In an argument designed to authenticate his apostolic claims as an authoritative teacher of the gospel of Christ, Paul employs the divine feelings as a powerful motive. He lays great stress upon the *meekness and gentleness of Christ.* And this is the theme of my discourse this morning — the gentleness of Christ!

Gentleness is not a separate and distinct faculty. It is the

method by which strength manifests itself. Softness and tenderness from want of strength constitute weakness, not gentleness. Nothing can be less influential than kindness springing from imbecility. That kind of gentleness which springs from weakness increases as things approach zero.

Gentleness is not, then, the mere absence of rude vigor. It is the softness and tenderness of vigor and great power. It is sweet in the degree in which it is the attribute or the fruit of power, and in the degree in which it springs from authority and dignity. The greater the power of the being, the greater will be the marvel and the delicacy of gentleness. In a woman we expect gentleness. We are shocked by its absence rather than surprised by its presence. But in a warrior we scarcely expect it, and, therefore, it creates an admiration that it does not in woman. . . .

Gentleness, likewise, is wonderful in proportion to the moral sensibility and discriminating purity of the mind which exercises it. Divine moral indifference would extract all merit and efficacy from goodness and gentleness. If God were gentle to sinful men simply because he cared nothing for moral character, and because indifference were easier to himself, gentleness would then be an inflection of indolence and selfishness, and would neither produce surprise nor admiration. Gentleness, springing from easy good-nature, which will not take the trouble to vindicate justice and right, will not command even respect. . . .

I

Consider, then, with these qualifying and interpreting remarks, what must be the nature of gentleness in God. He dwells alone from eternity to eternity because there is none other that can be of his proportion and of his grandeur of being. Supreme by his own nature, supreme by the acclamation of heaven, but also supreme simply because he is more than all else, being the cause of everything! There is none

with whom he can take counsel. All powers of nature are but the commonest servants of God. Tornadoes, and earthquakes, and fire, and air, and water, are but his servants that do his errands. Nor is there an angel in heaven, or human being on earth, nor are there spirits of just men made perfect above, to whom he does not stoop down, through infinite degrees, when he communicates his thoughts.

And who among them can advise and counsel with God, since their light is but his own reflected light? They throw back to the sun only that which they take from it! Self-sustained, and pouring out from the fountain of his own life into the souls of all created intelligences, as oil is poured into lamps, how wonderful is his greatness! How vast is he, and how superior to all others! His vast movements are along the circuits of eternity. The whole earth is said to be but a drop of the bucket before him. What must that ocean-universe be, of which this earth is but a single drop?

Did you ever, in a summer's day, when you had drawn from the bottom of the well the cool water to slake your thirst, stand, and dream, and gaze at a drop orbed and hanging at the bucket's edge, and reflecting the light of the sun? What the rounded form and size of that drop is, in comparison with the whole earth itself, that the round earth itself is in comparison with God's majesty and immensity of being! And that such a One, living in such a wise — so far above the noblest spirit that stands in the unlost purity of heaven — that such a One should deal with his erring children with a gentleness and patience such as characterizes the administration of God toward man, is wonderful and sublime!

Consider, not alone the greatness of God's absolute being, and his gentleness as a being of infinite strength, but also his moral purity and his love of purity, his goodness and his love of goodness, and his abhorrence of evil. But how shall we measure these things?

God has left the impress of his genius upon the natural

world in such a way that if we know how to read it aright, this globe contains indications of the truths that Scripture itself develops. These truths, however, are not to be first learned from nature; they are to be recognized in nature after Scripture has unfolded them to us. . . .

Nature is saturated, so to speak, with God. She bears in her structure the feelings and disposition of the divine Creator, as a picture bears in its parts the feelings and disposition of the man who painted it, or as Christ's face expressed his feelings of love, pity and authority. Nature is full of indications of divine attributes. Natural law, through all time, and round the world, conveys hints and germs of heaven, of hell, of vicarious suffering, and of remedial mercy. It teaches these four things: Disobey and suffer, obey and enjoy; these are its first and fundamental lessons, which are the rude seed-forms of those higher truths: Purity and heaven, impurity and hell. Then throughout the world we see illustrations of the fact that one man can suffer for another. In the mother's suffering, and in the father's watch and care, the child grows out of impurity and rudeness into purity and gentleness. Vicarious suffering is a law of the household and of society. It is one of the eternal truths of God's nature.

Remedial mercy is also a truth which nature hints. In the natural world, within certain bounds, a man's wrong-doing may be repaired, if he turn from his transgression and repent. There is provision for every bond to knit together again when fractured, for every muscle to heal when lacerated, and for every nerve, when shattered and diseased, to return again to health. Thus in nature we see prefigured the great scheme of redemption. Purity gives heaven; impurity eternal wail and woe. But there is vicarious suffering to bring men from the one to the other. If through Christ there be repentance and turning from evil, there is also health and restoration. And these things are indicated in nature — when we know how to see them there — but are authori-

tatively taught only in the New Testament. In nature they are as twilight, while in the Gospel they glow with noonday brightness.

II

. . . Now what is the interpretation of these indications of God's disposition in nature? If you would understand them, you must go to the Scriptures. Listen, then, to the words of God through his servant Moses, as recorded in the thirty-fourth chapter of Exodus, beginning with the fifth verse:

"And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.". . .

Do these words interpret a God of moral indifference? Do they not, rather, reveal a God sensitive to every pulsation of right or wrong — a God affected with admiration and gladness by everything that looks toward virtue, and truth, and holiness; and aroused to a moral repugnance and judicial abhorrence by everything that looks toward corruption, and selfishness, and wickedness? God stands between the right and the wrong, not looking pleasantly on the one, and equally pleasantly on the other — nor looking, as the sun looks, with a benignant face on the evil and on the good, and not as man looks — with only a less benignant face upon the evil! He stands with all the fervor of his infinite love, and all the majesty of his unlimited power, approving good, and legislating for it; disapproving evil and abhorring it, legislating against it and bringing it into infamy and under eternal penalty. If

there be one truth that speaks throughout the Bible like the voice of God, and resounds through all nature with all the grandeur of divine intonation, it is the truth that God does not look with an equal eye upon the evil and the good; that he is a discriminator of character, a lover of that which is right, and a hater of that which is wrong. . . .

That a being such as this, who is independent of all other beings; who has made them all; who, by the mere act of his will, can obliterate them; who can rub them out easier than I can rub out the colors from the butterfly's wing; who is full of infinite creative resources, with the power alike to crush this earth to atoms and make it over again easier than the potter can mold again an unburnt earthen vessel after he has dashed it in pieces — that such a being, who is in no wise obliged to study economies; who is unbounded in thought, unbounded in skill, unbounded in wisdom, and unbounded in power; who has all eternity in which to mark out his pictures and build his architectures, and who, with all his vastness, is extremely sensitive to moral qualities, so that he cherishes the most ardent love for that which is good, and the intensest hatred for that which is evil — that such a being should carry himself with care, with quiet, with softness, with delicacy, with gentleness toward men, and toward those, too, who have, by their conduct, forfeited all claim to mercy and gentleness — this *is* wonderful!

That the eternal Father, who forbids us to look upon the sun and say "Thou art my god," or to look upon the moon and stars and say "Ye are my gods," and who disdains with infinite scorn to be represented by the chisel of the sculptor or by the pencil of the painter — that he should carry himself with exceeding tenderness and patience toward us erring creatures, and say, "A bruised reed I will not break, and smoking flax I will not quench, till I send forth judgment unto victory" — this is a miracle surpassing all wonders.

"A bruised reed shall he not break." Is there anything

that grows so high, carrying up so little strength of stem, as the reed that rises twenty or thirty feet in the air, and has a stalk not larger than my finger? Now a beast, breaking through the thicket, eager, with his unquenched thirst, for the cooling draught, strikes against the slender reed, shattering it, so that it has but just strength to sustain its own weight. So weak is it that if there be so much wind as to lift one of its leaves, or to bend it in the least degree in either direction, it must surely break. But God says, "My gentleness is such that when I go down among men whose condition is like that of a bruised reed, I will do nothing to complete their overthrow, but will deal with them in such a way that they shall gather strength, till I have sent forth judgment unto victory."

"And smoking flax shall he not quench." If the flame is just dying out in a lamp, it is not in danger of being suddenly extinguished, for the old warmth in the wick serves for a time to nourish and sustain it. But immediately after the wick is lighted, and before any warmth is communicated to it, the least movement is sufficient to extinguish it. God says, "Wherever there is a spark of grace lighted in the soul, if it flickers so that the breath of the person who carries it, or the least motion of his hand, is in danger of putting it out, I will deal so gently with him as not to quench that spark. I will treat it with such infinite tenderness that it shall grow into a flame which will burn on forever." And these are the symbols by which God measures his wonderful gentleness.

III

Now with a conception before your mind of what God is in his moral aptitudes and discriminations, as well as what he is in his infinity, omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence, consider what tax he has had on his patience and

his forbearance, and what his gentleness must be in the light of human provocations.

The life of every individual is a long period of moral delinquency. No one who has not had the experience of a parent can have any adequate conception of the patience and gentleness exercised even by a mother in rearing her child, from the cradle to the door of the world, when, at twenty-one years of age, he goes forth from her care. It is only after-experience that can give the child a true idea of how much the mother bore with him, and how much kindness, and love, and forbearance, and generosity, and delicacy, and gentleness she showed toward him during his passage from infancy to manhood. True mothers are God's miniatures in this world; and we see portrayed in them, on a small scale, the very traits and delineations of that character which makes God the eternal Father of sinful men.

How great will be the disclosure which shall be made when, in the great day, Christ shall unroll from the archives of eternity the history of each individual soul, and make known what not even the watching mother saw, nor the wide-thinking father, and what not even the subject himself dreamed of! How great will be the disclosure which shall be made when Christ shall expose to view all the secret throbbings of every soul; all the jutting motives of his heart; all the thoughts and intents of his mind that never took form in action; all the acts that he has performed and forgotten; and all the impulses of his interior life, upon which God has hung with close inspection, and which he has felt with all the sensibility of a heavenly Father's heart!

Now consider, not individual life, great as that is, but national life. Consider that men perish at the rate of thirty millions a year; that in any one day ten hundred millions of men live on the face of the earth; that every man has a history complex, continuous, and almost infinite in detail;

that these ten hundred millions of human souls are walking toward the door of darkness from life to death, or rather from life to life — consider these things, and then that, which is marvelous as exercised toward an individual man, becomes transcendent and amazing when exercised toward the whole race and extended through all time! . . .

Consider what turmoil of nations there has been. Consider what have been the many and long continued oppressions and wrongs that have been practiced by man upon man. Consider how God hates tyrants; and yet how almost every man that ever lived has been a petty tyrant. Consider how God hates underminings; and yet how men, the world over, are striving to undermine each other. Consider the jealousies, the hatred, the feculent vices, the hideous crimes, the degrading selfishness of national life. . . .

Consider the events which have marked the long line of history; reflect upon the number, and succession, and cruelty of wars. For I believe that from the beginning of the world one war has not gone out before some fiendish hand has seized the brand from its smoldering heap and kindled a new one, so that war has touched and kindled war in an unbroken succession through all time. There is nothing else that begins to compare in cruelty with the human race. Sharks are merciful, and lions and serpents are angelic compared with men. Man is the chief monster that the earth ever bred.

Consider what despotisms have inflicted their dominations, their outward violence and injury, their inward cruelty, and their corrupting influences upon the world. Consider what slavery has done, what barbaric savagery it has brought upon a large portion of the human race. . . .

Judge from your own feelings how God, with his infinite sensibility, must feel when he sees men rising up against their fellow men; performing gross deeds of cruelty on every hand; waging wars that cause blood to flow like rivers

throughout the globe; when, in short, he sees them devastating society by every infernal mischief that their ingenuity can invent.

The Bible says that God is past finding out. But it does not merely mean that his physical power is past finding out. It is his disposition — his moral nature, that are peculiarly beyond research and measurement. The unsearchableness of the love of God in Christ Jesus; the greatness, the grandeur, and the glory of the heart that, hating iniquity with an intense hatred, can love the doer of it, and that, abhorring sin with an infinite abhorrence, can give itself to save the sinner — these are the things that are past finding out. The marvel of meekness, and sweetness, and love in the arch thunderer of eternity — this it is that is past finding out!

If God cared for the misconduct of men no more than we do for the fiery strifes of an anthill, there would be no foundation for such a conception of divine gentleness and divine goodness. There are some who seem to think that God, when he created men and placed them in the world, set on foot an experiment; that he does not care what they do, but that he is satisfied to let them act as they choose, and see what they will come to. Let them have such an idea of God! I will have none of it! If God in moral elements were a sun shining on the good and on the evil just alike, as he does in his physical administration, we could not have the view of him which I have been presenting; but he is the righteous judge of all the earth. He is the eternal author and lover of equity. Listen to what he himself says in the fiftieth Psalm:

"Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth? seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth

deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; *thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself*; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." Is this the language of one that does not care what men do? . . .

Evil is eternal in the sight of God, unless it be checked and cured. Sin, like a poisonous weed, resows itself, and becomes eternal by reproduction. Now God looks upon the human race in the light of these truths. And tell me what other attribute of God, what other inflection of his character, is so sublime as this — his gentleness? How wonderful has been its duration; how deep its nature; how exquisite its touches; how rich its fruit! What assurance does it bring to our hope! How boundless is the scope it opens to our eye! How wonderful is the combination of traits in his disposition! It was because the lion and the lamb first lay down together in the heart of God that the prophet declared that they shall yet do it on earth.

IV

Now, while these statements are fresh in your mind, and your imagination glows, and your affections are warm, I desire to present to you a clear conception of God as your *personal* God. They who are accustomed to present God almost entirely through the ideas of law as an official, gubernatorial personage, have produced upon the minds of multitudes the disastrous effect of substituting a mere abstraction for a living, glowing personality. Much as I may esteem theologians, and much as I believe in and admire a great deal that they say or write, yet against such a mode of presenting God my soul kindles in the proportion in which I myself do love the Savior, and in the measure of the desire

that I have to lead men to him. If sometimes I have seemed to tread down, rudely, opinions that have hitherto been reverently held, it has not been so much from disrespect, as from an eagerness to brush away and to destroy everything that lifts itself up between the soul of man and a living Savior.

From all the human passions there have risen up vapors densely concealing the face of God as clouds hide the sun. All the active world, too, by its unhallowed forms of pleasure, by its ambitions, by its mighty whirl of business, by its sweltering strifes, has joined to exclude from men any heart-saving conception of God; and it has always seemed to me too much that religious men should inadvertently increase this very mischief, and so present God as to make a conception of him by ordinary men impossible, or possible only in a way that shall take all influence from the thought of him.

Not long ago there was a researcher of art in Italy, who, reading in some book that there was a portrait of Dante painted by Giotto, was led to suspect that he had found where it had been placed. There was an apartment used as an outhouse for the storage of wood, hay and the like. He sought and obtained permission to examine it. Clearing out the rubbish, and experimenting upon the whitewashed wall, he soon detected the signs of the long hidden portrait. Little by little, with loving skill, he opened up the sad, thoughtful, stern face of the old Tuscan poet.

Sometimes it seems to me that thus the very sanctuary of God has been filled with wood, hay and stubble, and the divine lineaments of Christ have been swept over and covered by human plastering, and I am seized with an invincible desire to draw forth from its hiding-place, and reveal to men the glory of God as it shines in the face of Christ Jesus! It matters little to me what school of theology rises or what falls, so only that Christ may rise and appear in all his Father's glory, full-orbed, upon the darkness of this world! It matters little to me what church comes forth strong or what becomes

weak, so only that the poor, the sinful, the neglected, the lost among men, may have presented to them, in the church, a Savior accessible and available in every hour of temptation, of remorse, or of want!

It is this Christ that I would make personal to you today. He is not a being that dwells in the inner recesses of the eternal world, inaccessible, incomprehensible. He is not the stern king, unbending, upon a throne of justice, lifted up above the reach of sighs and soul-wants. He is not as one fortified behind the bulwarks of law, so that we must cannonade, and breach the walls with prayers, and then rush in to take him captive. Men never find Christ, but are always found of him. He goes forth to seek and to save the lost. It is not the outreaching of our thought, it is not the abstraction of our heart, it is not the strong drawing of our sympathy and yearning that brings him to us. It is the abounding love of his heart that draws us up toward him. His love precedes ours. "We love him because he first loved us." We kindle our hearts at his. As the sun is up before the sluggard, so the twilight and dawn of his love is upon the hills when we wake; and when we sleep, even, his thoughts burn above us as the stars burn through the night. . . .

He does not set his holiness and his hatred of sin like mountains over which you may not climb. He does not hedge himself about by the dignities and superiorities of divinity. All the way from his throne to your heart is sloped; and hope, and love, and patience, and meekness, and long-suffering, and kindness, and wonderful mercies, and gentleness, as so many banded helping angels, wait to take you by the hand and lead you up to God. And I beseech you by his gentleness, too, that you fear him no longer; that you be no longer indifferent to him; that you wound him by your unbelief no more, but that, now and henceforth, you follow him — "for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

But can any be saved except those who voluntarily and intelligently believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? *Most assuredly they can.* One-half the human race die in infancy, before the child knows its right hand from its left, and is the blessed truth of their salvation to be annihilated? Or, falling like sparks through the lurid air of hell, shall we believe that they burn forever? Does not universal Christendom believe that they go straight, in the bosom of angels, to their Father's Kingdom? So do I believe. So would I believe if there were not another man on the face of the earth that thought so!

Yet they are too young to understand the name of Christ, or to believe in him. Their ear has never been formed to hear the very sound of his name. Yet, blessed be God, the salvation of Christ Jesus, that they could not understand on earth, shall greet them and glorify them in heaven! It is settled, then, that Christ saves men who have never heard of him, and who cannot hear. But has this salvation a wider scope than infant children? Are there any others who will experience the grace of him whom they never knew?

Let those answer that seem to know so much, who have searched out God's whole government, and know all about it. I say again I do not know. I yearn, and hope, and long; but I do not know. . . . For those who never heard him; to whom no sweet sound of the gospel ever came; whose week was one long rolling surge, unbroken by the tranquil shore of any Sabbath, and who, in this darkness and neglect, yet always groped upward, endeavoring to live a life better than their times, yearning and longing to know a better way — may we not hope, in the inscrutable mystery of divine wisdom, that there was some mode of applying to such the benefit of the death of Christ? That the vision rose, at last, upon their eye, cleansed from the films of flesh? And that among the myriad voices of heaven there are some from the heathen world, who, though on earth they could give no name to that after which their souls yearned and searched, no sooner be-

held the divine glory of the Savior than they cried out, "This is he for whom we have waited"? . . .

V

But for all those who have been clearly taught, who have been moved by their wicked passions deliberately to set aside him of whom the prophets spake, whom the apostles more clearly taught, whom the Holy Spirit, by the divine power, now makes known to the world through the gospel — for them, if they reject their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. If they deliberately neglect, set aside, or reject their Savior, he will as deliberately, in the end, reject them.

Sometimes, in dark caves, men have gone to the edge of unspeaking precipices, and, wondering what was the depth, have cast down fragments of rock, and listened for the report of their fall, that they might judge how deep that blackness was; and listening — still listening — no sound returns; no sullen plash, no clinking stroke as of rock against rock — nothing but silence, utter silence! And so I stand upon the precipice of life. I sound the depths of the other world with curious inquiries. But from it comes no echo and no answer to my questions. No analogies can grapple and bring up from the depths of the darkness of the lost world the probable truths. No philosophy has line and plummet long enough to sound the depths. There remains for us only the few authoritative and solemn words of God. These declare that the bliss of the righteous is everlasting; and with equal directness and simplicity they declare that the doom of the wicked is everlasting.

And therefore it is that I make haste, with an inconceivable ardor, to persuade you to be reconciled to your God. I hold up before you that God who loves the sinner and abhors the sin; who loves goodness with infinite fervor, and breathes

it upon those who put their trust in him; who makes all the elements his ministering servants, who sends years, and weeks, and days, and hours, all radiant with benefaction, and, if we would but hear their voice, all pleading the goodness of God as an argument of repentance and of obedience. And remember that it is this God who yet declares that he will at last by no means clear the guilty! Make your peace with him now, or abandon all hopes of peace.

Be not discouraged because you are sinful. It is the very office of his love to heal your sins. Not then only when you have overcome them yourself is he prepared to receive you; it is his delight to give you help while in the very bitterness of wrestling with your sins. He is your pilot to lead you out of trouble. No pilot would he be who only then would take my ship when I had gone through the narrows, and could see the city, and was quite free of all danger. Who would need a physician if he might not come to his bedside until after the sickness was healed?

What use of schoolmaster if one may not go to school till his education be complete? What hope of salvation if God would give us no help till the whole work of subduing the natural heart were completed? And our Savior is one who begins and completes in us the work of grace. He is the author of our faith, and the finisher of it. It is his power that works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. He comes to you when you are morally dead, and by his touch brings you to life. When you are weak, he inspires you with strength. When you are tempted, he opens the door of escape. When you are vanquished, he appears to lift you up and bind your wounds. Yes, bending under all our burdens, and loaded down with our own sins, behold that Christ of whom it is said, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All

we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.". . .

Perhaps you have not long to live. The nail is forged and the screw is made that shall hold down the lid of your coffin. The loom is built, and the thread is spun, and the shroud is woven that is to wrap some of your lifeless forms, and you almost feel the coolness of the air of the grave. You ought, without delay, to make your peace with God, and secure a hope of immortality. You have no time to lose! Death, that is always busy, is no less so now than it has been at any period in the past.

I know what your lives have been. I know what worm it is that makes those leaves yellow at the surface. I know the rock on which you are stumbling. I know the rod that is being lifted higher and higher to break you in pieces. Dear friend, I must be faithful to your soul. You and I will meet, before long, at the judgment seat of God. You shall not be left in doubt as to whether I think sin is damnable. I stand here to speak the word of God to you. . . . I surround you with the generosity of God. I take the radiant robe of Christ's love, more glorious than the sun, and throw it about you. I surround you with divine gentleness, and meekness, and mercy. Why should you be naked? Why should you be defiled? Why should you impotently strive to cover yourself with your own poor devices, when divine love would clothe you with light and glory? Will ye be eternally beggared in the presence of an infinite supply? Will ye wander eternally, homeless and lost, when your Father's house stands open, and all heaven cries to you " Come! "

PRAYER

We draw near to Thee, eternal Father. There is none to whom we can go but unto Thee for such wants as we have. There is none that is wise enough for us if we seek each other's

counsel. . . . We rejoice that Thou dost think for us, that all our paths are laid by Thee, and that all Thy influences are with us and around us. Blessed are they that put their trust in the wisdom of God! We rejoice that we may draw near to Thee, for of sympathy with men there is but little. We are drawn to our own way and work. We understand but little, and only that part of life which is cast up before us. Hidden thoughts; wrestlings of the inward man; hopes and fears; the bitterness of grief and disappointment — these we cannot perceive, nor bear for one another.

And we rejoice that Thou, O God, art a high priest that can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. We may draw near to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and help in time of need, for our inmost thoughts are open before Thee, and in Thy gentleness, and loving-kindness, and grace Thou art concerned with each one of us. There are none so remote, there are none so ignorant, there are none so humble or insignificant as to be beyond Thy care and thought. Thou dost delight to descend to the humble and the contrite, and to dwell with such as are of a broken spirit.

We rejoice that in our conflicts we are not left to our own power and will. Thou dost work mightily in us and upon us. We cannot understand all the truth that there is in Thy moral administration. We know that we have liberty; we know that we are responsible for the misuse of the power of choosing; and yet we know and feel that Thou Thyself dost love us through all laws and in the midst of all human liberties, and that Thou dost, by the greatness and the fullness of Thine own power, help our infirmities and feebleness of thought and volition, and overrule even things that we purpose and desire. . . .

Thy patience has saved us. Many of us have ignorantly lived in ways that led down toward destruction, and Thou, O God, hast turned us away from them, hiding them, or blocking them up, that we might go no farther. And with

tears, and wonder, we perceive that it is Thy wisdom that has been our salvation, and that we should have ruined ourselves hadst Thou not interfered in our behalf. O God, on every side that we look we see how hasty we are, how we thrust forth our inexperience, how we trust our own strength and wisdom, that are but weakness and folly, and how we carry with ourselves, day by day, all the elements of self-destruction. And we recognize Thy divine power. . . .

Even so, O Lord Jesus, cease not Thy work of love and compassion in our midst. Teach Thy people how to pray and how to live, so that their life shall be a gospel preached perpetually. And we pray that out of our families, out of our Sabbath schools, out of our Bible classes, out of all the circles wherein we live and labor, there may be continually gathered those that are being prepared for immortality. We thank Thee that this people have been called to labor for Thee not unsuccessfully. Prepare them for greater labors. And grant that we may sow abundantly, in order that we may reap abundantly.

Prepare us for the services of the evening — for the speaking of Thy truth, and for the hearing of it. Grant that as we meet from Sabbath to Sabbath, we may mark how we are coming nearer and nearer to that blessed Sabbath which shall never end, when the sanctified shall be gathered together, when we shall find our loved and lost ones, when they shall be given to us with immortality of love, and when, above all, we shall meet Thee, O Lord God of our salvation! and we will give the praise to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

* From *Sermons by Henry Ward Beecher,* Selected and Revised by Their Author (New York: Harper & Bros., 1869).

Frederick William Robertson

1816 — 1853

FREDERICK WILLIAM ROBERTSON was born in London, England, February 3, 1816. He died at Brighton, August 15, 1853, in the prime of early manhood. He came of soldier stock. His father was a captain in the Royal Artillery who had been on the *Victory* with Nelson in his pursuit of Napoleon's men-of-war, served with the English land and naval forces in the American War of 1812 and distinguished himself at Hampton, Virginia, by capturing " with signal bravery the enemy's last fieldpiece." Frederick William's enthusiasm for a military life was thus literally born with him. His very early boyhood was passed at Leith Fort. " I was rocked and cradled," he wrote, " to the roar of artillery and the very name of such things sounds like home. . . . I cannot see a regiment maneuver nor artillery in motion without a choking sensation." He had a brother in the Royal Engineers and another in the Royal Rifles.

When he was five years old his father retired on half-pay and devoted himself to the education of his children. Frederick had every opportunity in England, France and Scotland. His boyhood was radiant. He loved nature, animals, birds, games, active competition in which he excelled. He really lived three lives: one of eager, athletic action; one of hard and successful study; one of lonely reverie and chivalric imagination. His passionate love of arms unified his conflicting ambitions, and against the intention of his father, who designed him for the church, he sought and finally obtained a commission in the Horse Guards. There, he thought, he might realize in life and action his two controlling devotions:

the service of arms and the service of Christ. He never felt any discrepancy between them. He gave up the army at his father's insistence, from a sense of duty to his father's purpose as well as from a deep distrust of his own judgment. His father immediately sent him up to Oxford where he matriculated at Brasenose. Five days later the offer of a cavalry commission reached him. His father saw the hand of God in the delay. Frederick was then twenty-one years old.

If Robertson's biography were to be written in the current psychological pattern, a keen analyst would find in this surrender to his father's will and in the crucifixion of his own passionate desire the secret of all his subsequent career, with its consuming intensities and its subterranean self-distrust. Having chosen what he did not choose to choose, he thereafter drove himself to loyalties and devotions which otherwise would have been supported by the entire consent of his entire nature. He accepted the office of clergyman as he would have accepted a forlorn hope in battle, and discharged it with banners flying — most literally a soldier of the cross. His decision gave to his ministry a quality of self-devotion, almost self-immolation. It determined his dominant themes. Preaching out of a divided self to a confused and divided time, he won a strange insight into other divided lives and supplied for them their own self-reconciliations. So much the psychologist might say.

For Robertson lived and preached and thought always in a world of tensions. His Oxford was shaken to its hoary foundations by the Tractarian controversy and was deeply under the spell of Newman. That spell Robertson acknowledged, but he refused to follow Newman's leadership. The England in which his too brief ministry was spent was seamed with social discontent. Labor was beginning campaigns not yet ended. All western Europe was acknowledging the results of the revolutions of 1848. The Anglican Church was torn

by a holy war between High, Low and Broad. Anti-papal England was on fire in opposition to the pope's untactful and overadvertised intention of dividing England into dioceses. In general, almost every Christian wanted to fight some other Christian. It was a strategic period for a soldier in the pulpit.

Actually Robertson sided with no militant party and his general influence was quieting rather than disturbing. He expressed his sympathy with the working class but did not go with Maurice and Kingsley into Christian Socialism. What he did believe, he believed intensely and spoke fearlessly, but always out of his divided self. His real travail of spirit was in another region: his gradual release from the — for him — numbing effect of his inherited evangelicalism. Stafford Brooke, his careful and sympathetic biographer, stresses the change between Cheltenham and Brighton. But it is difficult to be precise. His positions which now seem so moderate could only have been considered radical as set against the evangelical pattern of the England of his time. He did go through a " dark night of the soul " in which his only foothold — like Bushnell's — was the certainty that right is right. His supports in that crisis of his faith might have supplied Washington Gladden his theme for *Ultima Veritas.*

In appearance and carriage Robertson was the perfect early Victorian, whiskers and all, a Galahad living in the *Idylls of the King,* with some excursions, in his love of Alpine scenery, into Ruskin's *Modern Painters.* He loved poetry and lectured on it to workingmen with a solidity which testified to his power over an audience — and to their thoughtfulness. (One of those lectures ends with his well known defense of *In Memoriam.*) He was, in the fashion of the time, a prodigal letter writer, but thrifty in the use of his epistolary material: a description of a storm in the Alps turns up almost verbatim in a lecture on poetry. His preaching captured

Brighton and the imagination of England. Its power cannot be transmitted in print. He spoke from full notes which, as his restrained passion mounted, he crumpled unused in his hands. Such notes as are left are stiff in structure, though finely organized. It would seem to need a passion we cannot recover to set them on fire. Robertson always distrusted his extemporaneous sermons and could not easily be induced to write them out afterwards. Toward the end of his ministry he was under bitter attack, though it is hard to see for what. (One item was his belief that Dickens might have a moral value.) He died too soon, consumed by his work and content to die. What emerges most clearly from his sermons is the radiant beauty of his spirit, the purity of his passion, the completeness of his self-devotion to his church and its Master.

THE THREE CROSSES ON CALVARY

When they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

LUKE 23:33

THERE IS a twofold solemnity which belongs to the dying hour. It is the winding-up of life, and it is the commencement of eternity.

It is the winding-up of life; life then becomes intelligible; most of us go through this life scarcely seeming what we are, one wraps himself up in coldness, another in half-hypocrisy; but when it comes to the last, the whole is wound up, and death lays a hand so violent upon the frame that the mask falls suddenly off.

Again, it is the commencement of eternity, for in a short time the body of the dying man will pass away, and his soul will be in possession of that secret which we are toiling all

our lives to find. And the solemnity of the thought that he will soon be in possession of that secret communicates itself in a degree to those around him. It is this which gives importance and solemnity to the dying hour even of the meanest; around his bed the great and powerful will come as if to read in his countenance the secrets of their own mortality. It is this which gives even to the dying hour of the suicide something of importance. The veriest trifler that ever fluttered through this awful world of God's, commands for one hour at least the world's attention.

It is these two thoughts which make the dying hour so solemn; and a threefold portion of this interest belongs to the scene of Calvary. Upon this mount three crosses stood; generally our attention is fixed only upon one, but it becomes us to remember that there were three, and that upon each a human soul was breathed away. From each there is its own peculiar lesson to be gathered.

Here, then, there is opened for us a subject for contemplation, dividing itself into three branches: first, the dying hour of devotedness; secondly, the dying hour of impenitence and hardness; and thirdly, the dying hour of penitence.

I

First we look at the central cross; on that cross of Christ there was that transacted which never can be exhibited in any dying hour of ours. There was exhibited the grandest expression of that greatest law of ours, that law according to which life cannot be, except through death. But it is not on this, the atonement, that we dwell now; we look upon Jesus now simply as a dying man, and the first lesson that we learn is the conquest of suffering.

He was as much bound to perform the law of God as the meanest creature on earth. He was as much subject to the law of suffering as we are; there was a work to be done upon his own soul; and of him in his private, and not in his public

capacity was it said that "the captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering." This it is which throws so much force on those inspired words, "He became obedient even to the death of the cross." It was not death alone, but death through the cross. The work of the Savior's soul would have been left imperfect if one single drop of agony had been left untasted; and this seems to be shown by his refusing the mixture of gall and myrrh offered to him in order to dull his sufferings: for it is written that "after he had tasted thereof he would not drink." He knew the strength and blessedness of suffering, and would not meet his death without intensely feeling it; he would bear all, he would suffer all; the Father had put into his hand the cup to drink, and he had, as it were, carried that cup, though brimful of agony, to his lips with a hand so steady that not one drop of all its suffering trickled down.

Here is a lesson for us. Part of our obedience and work here on earth is to be done in vigor and in health, part when laid aside in suffering. Much of this must be unintelligible to us here. There is not one present who will not some day exchange the vigor of life for a broken constitution and a suffering frame; no one can know what suffering is till he has known mental torture; and no one can know the extremity of corporeal suffering till, like his Master, he has counted the long hours of torture one by one, and through night after night has heard the clock strike in protracted anguish. This is what we are called upon to endure, and then often it is that fretfulness and impatience break across our souls, and we wish that the whole of our future could be concentrated into one sharp hour. Brethren, a man's work is not done upon earth, so long as God has anything for him to suffer; the greatest of our victories is to be won in passive endurance; in humbleness, in reliance, and in trust, we are to learn to be still, and know that he is God.

In the next place we learn from that dying hour the in-

fluence of personal holiness. The Son of Man came not to the cross to preach, but to suffer; yet in that hour two at least were added to the church, two at least were enrolled in the number of those that shall be saved hereafter.

When God threw Christianity down upon the world to win her way through almost insuperable impediments, the weapon which he put into her hand, the only weapon, was the talent and eloquence of a life of holiness. Brethren, let the distinction be drawn between the life of holiness and the life of mere blamelessness. Blamelessness and accuracy are beautiful to look upon, but they do not save the soul. The world has enlisted into her service the power of talent and eloquence, but these are not the things that lead to God; men listen to your talent and your eloquence, and recognize the power of your influence; but they know that all you say may be unreal and unfelt; and therefore they come merely as looking upon a picture, and admire, but nothing further. It is not this, it is the divine mysterious power of holiness that tells upon the world.

What these two men saw upon the cross was different from what they had ever seen before. And in the one case contempt was softened into adoration, " Truly this man was the Son of God "; in the other case, hardness was changed into adoring love, " This man hath done nothing amiss." Now what was it that produced this change? It was not the courage, for thousands had died upon the cross before. And if they wanted recklessness they had but to turn to the other cross where was one dying bravely enough, but where was none of the marvelous meekness that was seen on the center cross, none of those words of infinite tenderness, " Father, forgive them, they know not what they do "; there was a recklessness there which enabled him to meet pain with defiance, but none of those words of meekness and trust, " Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Brethren, it is not talent, nor power, nor gifts, that do the

work of God, but it is that which lies within the grasp of the humblest: it is the simple, earnest life led with Christ in God.

II

We are now, secondly, to consider the lesson which comes from the dying hour of impenitence.

Round the cross of the dying thief were accumulated such means as never before met together to bring a man to God. He had felt the power of pain, that power which is often exerted in the soul to soften it. He had heard the truth preached by one recently converted, and we all know the intensity and earnestness of fresh love; preached also by a dying man, whose words are generally received with a kind of veneration, or at least attention. There was one beside that cross, moreover, a teacher such as no other man had ever had in his dying hour. And yet, with all these means and advantages, there was nothing but a soul steeled against the truth.

Brethren, the lesson we learn from this is the improbability of a late repentance. There are some men not looking for anything of the kind, but desperately looking forward to certain ruin hereafter, who can receive the announcement of approaching misery even with calmness. But this is not the feeling of most men towards death. The oldest among us here thinks there is yet space enough between him and death for a work still to be done; the day is to come when his present pursuits will be given up, and the things of this world exchanged for the care of his immortal soul; that which he loves now, he thinks he shall hate then, forgetting that what is pleasant now, will be pleasant to the last. And this is what, more or less, we are all doing; there is not one of us who can lay his hand upon his heart and say, " I have given up all, I am living now as I should wish to die."

Now let us endeavor to remember some of the arguments

which make a future change improbable. The first argument is that, that there comes a dullness and rigidity of the intellect as life goes on; in the old man's mind channels cut themselves, channels through which thoughts flow; the opinions of the man become fixed; rarely does a man change his opinions after forty years of age. And then add to this the feeling of insecurity which comes from trembling between life and death, the agitation which comes with the dying hour. The probability of repentance is thus removed to a distance almost infinite. For either delirium comes, or else sharp acute pain which dissipates the faculties.

Even looking at it intellectually it becomes improbable. The dying thief had lived for years with the prejudice that Jesus was an impostor; and then, when racked in torture, was not in a state in which to change his opinions. As he had lived, so he died.

Again, the improbability of this change arises from the fixing of the affections. All life long this man had lived with his affections fixed on earth; this is the secret of that expression with which he taunted his Redeemer, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us"; life is all he asks; if he could not save his life all other salvation to him seemed useless. Brethren, grant it for one moment that reason should remain at the last steady to judge of the question then before us, yet this were not enough; even if a man could hear the spade hollowing out his grave, and could look upon the coffin lid with his own name engraved thereon, with the date of birth and the date of death, there might be much in this to disengage his heart from earth, but would there be in it one element to fasten his soul on holiness?

Lastly, there is an improbability of change in the deadening of the conscience. There was an appeal made to the conscience of the dying thief, but made in vain: "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" It was made in vain, because his conscience was in a state of

deadness. We find it written that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. It is the greatest evil, and worst penalty of doing wrong, that at last a man ceases to distinguish right from wrong. This was the state in which this man was, and oh! I pray you to remember that towards this state we all are hastening who are hardening our hearts. If there be one among us doing that, putting off the time of repentance to a more convenient season, let him remember that there are two questions to be asked: whether it is likely that the change would come? — and, whether there is anything in pain that will make holiness more lovely and more dear? And if in defiance of all experience he answer in the affirmative, then there is another question, whether God will be trifled with so long, and whether he will suffer a man to go on enjoying life until he has no fresh emotion left, and then will be permitted to give the dregs of a polluted life, and a worn-out heart to the God whom he has despised all life long. The ancient prophets spoke emphatically against offering God services which cost us nothing. The meaning they intended to convey is clearly that God will have our best — Christ gave the best, himself.

My young brethren, now, while emotion is fresh and your affections are worth the having, before the time comes when you are worn and weary, "remember your Creator in the days of your youth!"

III

We turn now to consider the dying hour of penitence. We have said that repentance at the last is a thing *improbable*. Blessed be God, it is not a thing impossible. It has been well said that there has been one instance of a late repentance given us in order that none may despair, and but one that none may presume. The penitent thief expressed his sense of guilt in these words: "We suffer justly the due reward of our deeds." We can lay down no rules for the amount of

grief and sorrow; to do so would be as absurd and futile as to lay down laws as to how often a forgiving spirit might pardon an offending brother. There can be no law here, for it is decided by many things, by age, by sex and by constitution.

We believe that the Church of Rome has erred in substituting penance for penitence; and yet here Rome has in her way expressed a truth, that the natural result of great sin will be the expression of great grief. Perhaps we in our Protestantism have erred in making the way to holiness after sin unnaturally easy. We present a few doctrines to the soul, and then, on the acceptance of a few intellectual truths, it is expected that the great sinner will become the great saint without a tear of agony for the past. Great nature refuses to be thus trifled with. In God's dealing with the soul, there is something analogous with the cure of wounds. When the cut is deep and the blood flows freely, its first effect is to close the wound by its coagulation. So it is with grief: if it is allowed to flow freely, the wound may soon be healed; but if instead of grief and sorrow we expect a few doctrines to do the work alone, then we shall soon see the blood break forth afresh.

We also remark here the penitent's zeal for Christ; he spoke as if he himself had been offended, "Dost thou not fear God?" We talk much of toleration; if we mean by that a generous sympathy with the different forms of opinion, then it is Christian; if toleration mean compassion for frailty, and a willingness ever to make a distinction between tempted weakness and deliberate evil, then toleration is nothing more than another name for the mind of Christ. But if it mean that we are to reckon one form of opinion as good as another, and look upon sin merely as a disease against which we cannot feel indignation, then more unquestionably Christianity has in it no toleration. And I remark that zeal, even though it exceed the bounds of righteousness, is a more hopeful thing

than lukewarmness; better far to be like the apostle Paul before he was an apostle, better to be like the Son of Thunder, better to be like the ancient prophets using the stern language of denunciation, than like Pilate, unconcerned as to the fate of his prisoner so long as he himself was absolved from blame. In the former case, the persecuting Saul became the large-minded Paul, the most liberal and the noblest of all the spirits that have been given to man; and the Son of Thunder became the Apostle of Love. Years and experience will by degrees soften zeal into love, but there is no remedy for lukewarmness.

Moreover, we observe, in the dying hour of the penitent thief, the missionary spirit of doing good. One opportunity only of doing good was given him, and he used it with all his heart.

If we were asked what mark distinguishes Christianity from the world, our reply would be, charity. It is not faith, for the religion of Jesus has faith in common with other religions, but it is charity. "By this," says our Master, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." The man of love may be guilty of many blunders of doctrine, while cold-hearted men may always be intellectually right; but in the last great day love will be recognized as the one thing needful. The faults of the men of love shall soon disappear in the Redeemer's blood, and leave nothing there, save the love of one who loveth much because much has been forgiven.

In conclusion, we have two remarks to make.

First, that the intermediate state is not a state of unconsciousness. It may be replied, "What signifies this?" This is interfering with things unseen; we can be calm in only knowing that the soul is with God. Our answer is, that if God has revealed it, it is our duty to receive it; and it is by no means unimportant, for though there may be those among men who can leave that matter undecided, feeling certain of

the love of God, and can throw themselves into the arms of God, knowing that they will be with him; yet there are others who cannot so think, and who feel "all their lifetime subject to bondage" in the thoughts of the long last sleep. Therefore it is that we point to this, and show how far Christianity thus differs from Judaism; for Judaism spake of the grave as dark, the place where the dead praise not God; while the New Testament speaks distinctly of a state of consciousness, for in the parable of Dives and Lazarus the rich man is represented as fully conscious in the world beyond of the condition of his sinful brethren. The apostle Paul, too, longs to depart that he may be with Christ — another proof that the grave is not unconsciousness. And in addition we have the example of the dying thief now before us, to whom our blessed Lord says, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

And secondly, we learn from this the completeness of the sacrifice of Christ. Some have so mistaken the meaning of their Master's death, as to believe that, when the soul has departed from the body, there is still a penal fire to finish the Savior's work. But look at the dying thief forgiven by his Lord; up to that time he had done nothing to make himself meet for glory, after his conversion he could do nothing; and yet, forgiven and redeemed upon the cross, he passed straight to Paradise.

My Christian brethren, we set this truth before you: "Ye are complete in Christ." He reconciled God to man, our work is therefore to become reconciled to God. To him that is in Christ there remains neither speck nor spot to be imputed.*

* This sermon was preached at Brighton, Dec. 22, 1850. From *The Human Race and Other Sermons by the Rev. F. W. Robertson* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Truebner & Co., 1883). This volume was edited by Robertson's son.

James Martineau

1805 — 1900

JAMES MARTINEAU was born in Norwich, England, April 21, 1805, and died in London, January 11, 1900. The Martineaus were of French Huguenot stock— and there is none better. (Those states which just now hesitate to open their gates to refugees might profitably review what the Huguenot refugees brought to the lands which sheltered them.) Gaston, who fled the Dragonades, was born (probably) in Bergerac. The name Martineau suggests bird-haunted waters (as I remember the Rhone at Avignon), and something of the swallows' flight endured and shone in James Martineau's mind and spirit.

The emigré Martineau family were physicians and surgeons in Norwich for four generations, a sturdy and fertile folk. Thomas, James' father, was a merchant of whom his children could say, as John Ruskin said of his father, that he was "an entirely honest merchant." For he and his children between them finally paid twenty shillings in the pound in the liquidation of a business ruined by a war in Spain. The Martineau connections, intermarrying with their English neighbors, won many honors. James is the best remembered — he and his sister Harriet.

It was difficult for the children of nonconformist families to secure a proper education in England. The universities were closed against them. The experience of the Martineaus first and last with established churches was such as to give them no high opinion of either their good sense or their essential Christianity.

James got his higher education and theological training at

Manchester College, which was then at York. Few institutions have had a more interesting or migratory history. It began as an academy in Manchester, moved to York, returned to Manchester as Manchester New College, went south to London, and finally came to rest in Oxford, received and recognized by Balliol and Christ Church and all the rest, and a center of learning serving the English-speaking world.

The Martineaus were Calvinists by spiritual descent and as naturally Presbyterians. But English Presbyterianism had suffered profound theological modifications and, first without the name, became Unitarian. In general James Martineau moved with these theological currents. He began his ministry in Ireland and there presently resigned his very desirable charge because he would not accept as part of his salary a government subsidy raised largely by taxing his Roman Catholic neighbors. He was thereafter for twenty-five years minister of Paradise Street Chapel in Liverpool. Just why any street in Liverpool should have been called Paradise street I do not know, save perhaps in anticipation of the sermons James Martineau preached there. Some of them would make any street Paradise to those who care for preaching become a lyric art and for insights which bring the unseen and eternal to gray streets and low houses.

From about 1833 until his death his activities took three lines, never unrelated — on the contrary organically connected, and each one of them a vocation in itself. He preached and taught and wrote. The bare mention of his essays, reviews and books would be an article in itself. He was philosopher, theologian and New Testament critic, and shared in that recasting of almost every field of thought and inquiry which characterized the heart of the nineteenth century. He thought, moved and wrote, as their equal and sometimes as their master, among men who belong to the hall of fame of the English-speaking world, the greatness of whose

intellectual stature no contemporaneous reaction against their age can permanently obscure.

And always in semi-retreat. He preached to small congregations in plain churches. He taught, generation after generation, a few boys in schools deep in the shadow cast by the historic universities. He was sixty-five before he won much recognition anywhere. Then the tide slowly turned toward him and in the last twenty years of his long life brought him wide recognition and the coveted honors of the academic world.

Martineau's sermons are the distillation into lyric utterance of his philosophies, his wisdom in and about life and his brooding mysticism. It may be that his own theological difficulties led him to preach out of and into regions to which experience is always near, from which theology is often apparently remote. The great passages of his sermons are sublimated poetry. " In virtue of the close affinity, perhaps ultimate identity of religion and poetry, preaching," he himself held, " is essentially a lyric expression of the soul." And his was that. He was never a popular preacher; he could lay no spell on the popular mind.

He sought no end save vision, no issue save understanding. He had a vivid sense of sin and its consequences and pictured them in searing sentences, but the doom he pictures is spiritual death. His felicities are the wealth of the soul. Some mist of sadness softens his brightest light; some gleam from beyond the hills of time pierces his darkest shadows. His themes are simple but always moving. His style at its best is unmatched in its interweaving of metaphors and in its winged imagination. To read him is to fall under his spell. To have fallen under his spell is always afterwards to be dissatisfied with one's own work. I have chosen as representative the sermon which follows. A score of them ask to be heard.

THE WITNESS OF GOD WITH OUR SPIRIT

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. ROM. 8:16

IT WAS a favorite idea with Plato, that in order to discover the true doctrine of personal morality, we should begin by studying the commonwealth rather than the individual. The single soul, he thought, was too small and subtle a thing to reveal its nature and the laws that bind it, to a vision dull as ours; but in a great community we have a magnified image of the same human nature, with all its relations made colossal to the eye, and its swift passions reduced to a stately and measurable march. In this conception there is at least thus much of truth involved, that large social phenomena often show what is passing through the private heart; that tendencies silently operating on you and me, unmarked by others, unsuspected even by ourselves, may have conspicuous expression in the literature, the taste, the morals of the age; that lights of self-knowledge may therefore flash upon us from the open spaces of the world, and the broad pavement of our time serve to us as the secret confessional.

Thus we may find, I fear, a magnifying medium of self-inspection in a certain mode of speech about religion which is every year becoming more familiar, and separating us further from the simple fervor of an earnest and prophetic age. I refer to the disposition to look at faith instead of living in it; to own it as a noble fact in human nature, without becoming personally committed to it; to feel interest in its representations, but evade contact with its realities. There is no more favorite object of criticism than its different forms: the origin of each peculiar worship, the meaning of its symbols, the character of its doctrines, are a topic no longer special to the divine, but familiar even to the newspaper. Yet the great ob-

jects of trust seem none the nearer for all this: they lie off at second hand; and men discuss with the lips each other's creeds, instead of going into silence with their own God.

The pure and simple faith of the elder time has passed away; nor is it any sufficient compensation for the loss, that unbelief has grown gentle and respectful. For, in truth, the loss of enthusiasm in the one case and the improvement of temper in the other are both parts of the same phenomenon: they are the meeting, or at least the approximation of the two extremes upon the common ground of a secret skepticism, empty of all power, positive or negative. Waiving the awful and fundamental question — the only one that touches any living soul — whether the voice of prophets and of prayer be *true,* men agree that at any rate religion is an indestructible affection of the human mind; that whether we regard it as a dream, a philosophy, or a revelation, it remains a *fact;* that it is an influence of such transcendent importance as to reward study and demand regulation and control.

We find it accordingly not approached as a divine verity, but dealt with as a human product; dressed up and administered as a medicine for the maladies of character and society; judged of by its fitness to the wants of a nation or a class. The distastefulness of one extreme is studiously balanced by reaction into another; stagnant falsehoods are permitted to remain from indulgence to the sickly minds long used to breathe their exhalations; and to purer streams of thought no welcome is given, lest fevered mortals should feel too great a freshness, as of morning air.

Churches are built, not as holy shrines to God, but as platforms of sectional opinion; doctrines and sentiments are estimated, not by the sincere rule of our private heart — not by their intrinsic worth and sanctity — but by their supposed effect on the prejudices of others and the current usages of thought. All this betrays a disheartening unreality of faith. Such theological connoisseurship would sink abashed before

the living look of God; plunged in the pure and sanctifying tides of his infinite Being, all fear and art would be baptized away. There clings to us some untrustful feeling, something that keeps us mere lookers-on, and hinders the surrender of our minds to the divine captivity that makes their freedom.

I

Were I to try to give expression to the sort of doubt which saps our moral strength, I should do it in the language of a theory which pervades the atmosphere of modern thought, and may well affect us, though we know it not. "Religion," we perhaps think, "is a beautiful creation of the human soul, the embodiment of her highest aspiration and intensest hope, her acknowledgment of law, her sigh of guilt, her gaze of love, her solace for death, her picture of eternal perfectness. It is at least her sublimest effort, and an affecting testimony to the sweet and solemn depth of her nature. But whether, as she wanders through its scenery, she wakes and sees, or only dreams, is more than we can surely tell. Perhaps she has made her creed by giving names to the shapes of thought within her, and then turning them out to dwell as visions in the external space and light. As fear calls up the ghost it dreads to see, and grief projects upon the air an image of the dead, so perhaps may human faith only paint its heaven and invent its God." This is the misgiving which weakens the present age for great enterprises, and fills it with a certain tolerant sadness, patient of human trusts, but uninspired by them.

No man of veracious mind can be content until it is dissipated. He cannot let it remain doubtful whether his religion is a mere phantom world, floating across the wall of thought; or accept compliments upon its majesty and grace, as if it were a free creation of his soul. Talk to him as if its reality was only *relative to him,* and was unknown to the firm eternal universe, and your very gentleness insults and hurts him. "I

speak," he will reply, " that I do know, and testify that which I have seen; and if you receive not my witness as true, spare me your praise that it is beautiful. The divine objects I announce *are there,* and the light by which I see them has no glory but as it flows from their reality; were it self-kindled, it would be but a darkness turned into fire." If others cannot perceive the Holy Spirit that looks on us through the veil of life and nature — if in low moods of thought I lose the blessed Presence myself, and begin to ask whether it was a vision — why should I trust the blind heart instead of the seeing, and believe the night rather than the day?

Is it more likely that the pure soul, from its own sunbeams, should weave imaginary sanctities, than that the impure, by its turbid clouds, should hide the real ones? No; it is when inward confusion prevails in the conscience — when care consumes the temper and duty is heavy to the will — when the blood is hot, and the heart is cold — then it is that doubt becomes our tempter, and says daily unto us, " Where is your God? " When the fogs of earth lie thick around us, it puts the telescope into our hands, and says, " Now show us your stars! " We may retort the charge of brilliant dreaming, and say that our miserable doubts are but the black shadow of our own spiritual disorder thrown upon the universe and turning it into the negative of God.

This controversy between faith and unbelief, between the better inspirations and the meaner suggestions of our nature, is not confined to the sphere of direct religion. There is no pure admiration, no deep reverence, which has not to vindicate itself against a similar imputation. What floods of unspeakable beauty may pour upon the artist's view from a natural scene of moorland or sea beach, in which the literal observer, using his best eyesight, would find nothing to reward a look! What hints of wondering thought, what prayers of appealing love, may gleam through a clear eye, or quiver on a living face, where a common spectator sees nothing but the

color and the form! Which then has the truer appreciation of what is there? He who has only the ocular perception prides himself on seeing the plain reality, just as it is; and smiles at his imaginative neighbor who flings upon it a glory that dwells only in his dreams. He to whom the eye is but the spirit's instrument feels sure there is no falsehood in his vision, and sharply answers, "Thou dull mortal, thy lens and retina are good; but there is something opaque which the optician cannot reach; may God give thee light!"

So is it with every element and influence of life. There are some men before whom if you place some strain of deepest poetry, they will discern in it only the shape of the thought, the flow of the verse, and the fall of the rhyme; while to others it will bring tones of unearthly music, for the hymns of their secret heart, and the very page, as it lies spread upon the knee, will meet them with a holy look. Nay, even in the scientific study of the outward creation, there is room for the same difference between man and man. One, with the penetration of a vigilant intellect, will watch nature sharply, as if it were an enemy, or coldly, as if it were a dead mechanism, and note its movements and methodize its facts: another, with a certain pressure of love and reverence, will not sit outside, but enter with a secret sympathy into the interior, and so catch the style of the creative hand as to surmise its laws ere yet he proves them.

There is nothing which you may not try to understand in these two ways — by observation from without, and by affection taking its abode within: by the first you learn only what it is *not,* by the second you appreciate what it *is.* How rarely do you meet any particular man, among all who fill the streets, to whom you find it a congenial thing to apply the Christian doctrine of immortality! The name on the shop or office door seems not to stand on your register of heavenly things: the common features, the retail talk, the trivial cares, the mind filled up with the town news, appear so foreign to the atmos-

phere of God as to dash the glory of your religion; and when you go to his funeral, you think of the worthy tradesman who has lost his home, not of the saintly spirit that has attained it.

But with his wife and his children it is otherwise. To them he is a light in the very heaven which he obscures to you, and mingles a dear and venerable reality with a scene that was but shadowy before; he is the nearest object to their thought of God; his image mingles with their prayers; and in the picture of diviner worlds, nothing seems more clear and natural than he. Yet they have chafed against his faults more painfully than you; and have had that near familiarity which, except to the deepest hearts, is rarely free from its moments of dispute and discontent. But you have looked at him with the scanning eye of criticism; they, with the penetration of affection: you have noticed his manifestations; they have had insight into himself; have known his temptations; witnessed his faithfulness; felt his tenderness; overheard his sighs for a nobler life. And it is wonderful how often, when the artificial glass of judgment is thrown aside, and you trust to the transparent air of a natural love, the vulgarities of a soul appear to melt away, and you are disenchanted of your fastidious scorn.

II

Which then, in all these cases, is the true view — the *literal,* or the *devout?* The depth and beauty which enthusiasm everywhere beholds — are they *really there,* that we should try to rise into the vision? or are they a *romance,* that we should seek to wipe them off? Does the mind put them into nature, or take them out? Are we to honor their revealer as a prophet of divine endowment? — or their disenchanter, as the model of human wisdom? For my own part, without in the least denying that it is possible for an idealizing fervor to see too much, I believe we are in more danger from the dullness which sees too little. In relation to the highest truth, mere sense and intellect, looking through the frosty air of a wintry

heart, may be but instruments of delusion. If indeed we stood before the face of a dead universe; if nature were but an organization of atoms, pregnant with blind forces and teeming with unintended births; if the planets as they move did but dance the minuet of fate; if the morning light were but a chemical glare, quite empty of the play of thought, and the waters and the winds had no meaning in their song; if duty, hope and sorrow were the paroxysms of a puppet, a mere thrill upon the nerves; then, with our living mind to present before the scene, we should be above its meaningless materialism; there would be nothing to understand, nothing to reach, that is beyond the perceptions of the eye and the register of the cold intelligence.

But if, while we are on one side of nature, the Infinite God is on the other; if, interposed between the divine Spirit and the human, it may become the veil to separate them, or the communion to unite; if the plain of the restless sea and the curves of the quiet stars are the tracings of his living thought; if the scenery before us and the experience within us are the symbols of his speaking Mind; if conscience be his voice, and trial his appeal for deeper trust, and every gleam of aspiration the kindling of his touch: — O, then, how can we expect to know either nature or life but by the hermeneutics of a godlike spirit — the converse of sympathy between his will and ours? It is a work of *interpretation,* in which success will be chiefly won, not by the eye quick to apprehend the external characters of things, but by souls familiar with what holiest purpose and sublimest thought are likely to mean. A pure, faithful, devout and tender mind, borne down by no weight of stifled nobleness, and lifted above selfish fear and care, has the best key to the mysteries of humanity, and an insight into the counsels of the Infinite, clearer than acuteness and philosophy can give.

The skepticism which men affect towards their higher inspirations is often not an honest doubt, but a guilty negli-

gence; and is always a sign of narrow mind and defective wisdom. Who ever found that the heavy mood in which he could admire nothing, be touched by nothing, sanctify nothing, permanently proved the true one? Who, when once he has escaped it, does not know this leaden look and solid air upon the surface of life to be the brooding cloud of his own heart? And how often do the more luminous perceptions of other souls reveal to us, in nature, in art, in character, a beauty we had not discerned before, but which is no sooner shown than it startles us by its reality out of all denial! Left to ourselves to peer about from the dull prison of our grosser mind — unaided by the mighty spirits of our race, who emancipate us by their greatness and snatch us by their genius into the free light — how little should we see of the sanctity and glory of this world! What a dim and subterranean life we should live!

Yet the instant we are taken aloft we find that the darkness was the dream and the splendor is come true! If you will believe only in the perceptions of sense and distrust the intimations of the spirit, it is a question how low you will descend for your test of certainty. Will you depend upon your own faculties in proportion as they are simply animal, and deny them in proportion as they are divine? — confide in your eyesight and give the lie to the conscience and affections? The herds that low amid the Alpine echoes have, no less than you, the outline of the everlasting hills, and the verdure of the pine-cleared slope, painted on their vision, and the chant of the distant torrent swelling and fainting on their ear: is their perception truer — are they nearer to reality, because they cannot, with you, meet the sublime gaze of nature and see through to the eternity of God?

III

The grandeur and the glory that you behold, are they not *there?* The divine expressiveness, the speaking appeal to

your silent worship, the mingling of something secret with your spirit, as if unseen thought were flowing from the mountains and the sky, to meet the answering radiation of your soul — are these, which are the human privilege, a phantom of unreality — a delusion which the fortunate brutes escape? It is impossible! Call it imagination, call it wonder, call it love, whatever it be that shows us the deeper significance of the world and humanity and makes the difference between the surface-light of sagacity, and the interpenetrating glow of worship, we owe to it whatever highest truth, whatever trustiest guidance we have. Wherever there is anything beautiful to read, anything holy, anything tender and profound, this alone avails and commands the key of true interpretation.

The hard and literal mind mistakes everything in proportion as its import is of priceless worth; misses, beyond all others, the drift of human language, still more the silent expression of look and action, and gropes without apprehension through the blessed hieroglyphics of life and nature. Does not the poet, does not the prophet, ask for a reader with enthusiasm enough to appreciate him, and complain that by others he is *not understood?* If the greatest *human* works and utterances demand for their apprehension a soul kindled with intense affections, can we doubt what is the qualification, and what the disqualification, for reading the *divine?* May not their Author — Soul of our souls, who breathes the eternal poem of the universe, and attunes our minds to hear it, who provides at once the hymn of the morning stars that sing together and the chords of the spirit that tremble to their strain, ask as clear a response from us as we demand from one another?

When, therefore, in higher moments brought by the sorrows of life, the tension of duty, or the silence of thought, you catch some faint tones of a voice diviner than your own, know that you are not alone, and *who* it is that is with you. Stay not in the cold monologue of solitary meditation, but fling

yourself into the communion of prayer. Fold not the personal shadows round you; lie open to the gleam that pierces them; confide in it as the brightest of realities — a path of heavenly light streaking the troubled waters of your being, and leading your eye to the orb that sends it. Learn to distrust the suggestions of lower and more earthly hours, and scatter the fears of the slothful, unawakened heart. If we treat the very " light that is in us as darkness, how great is that darkness! " Be it ours to doubt the glooms, and not the glory of our souls; to lie low beneath the blinding cloud, and simply cry, " Lord, that I may receive my sight! " and rise up to prophesy, only when the heavens are opened, and the divinest scope of things is clear; to court, and not to shun, the bursts of holy suspicion that break through the crust of habit and the films of care, and accept them as a glance from the eye of the Infinite — the " witness of his Spirit with our spirit, that we are the children of God." *

* From *Hours of Thought,* Vol. I (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1888).

Horace Bushnell

1802 — 1876

HORACE BUSHNELL was born in Litchfield, Connecticut, April 14, 1802. He died in Hartford, Connecticut, February 17, 1876. His life combined in an unusual way the parochial and the universal. He belonged by descent, residence, vocation and association to a New England which believed itself at that time to be the center of American education, letters, industry and theology — and with sound reason. He belonged in the paternal line to the eighth generation of a tenacious, thrifty and fertile stock (probably of Huguenot descent) whose family heads lived and died in the same countryside in which the first Bushnell settled. Horace himself got no farther away than Hartford.

He was a Yankee by all the implications of that elastic word. He could card cloth, build a stone wall, swing a scythe and hold an ox-drawn plow in stony furrows. He had the road-builder's eye for country, Wordsworth's feeling for nature, a native thrift and a constitution impaired by the struggles of his ancestors with two hundred western New England winters. Congregationalism was native to the soil and to his spirit. Theological discussion was equally the native intellectual interest of the time and the region, and the Sunday sermon was the event of the week. Horace himself remembered boyhood Sabbaths in frigid churches, where under the hard faces of country congregations " great thoughts were brewing . . . of free will, fixed fate, foreknowledge absolute, trinity, redemption, special grace, eternity." * These seemed to him

* Theodore T. Munger, *Horace Bushnell, Preacher and Theologian* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1899).

glorious days though he shook with the coughing they bequeathed him as he praised them.

His life was as quietly secure as the life of any well loved minister of a prosperous church in the most delightful of New England cities, and yet invested with drama — the drama of a far-ranging mind challenging the rigidities of inherited theologies, recasting and humanizing them. For this he was accused of new heresies under old names, involved in controversies in which the weapons of his adversaries were archaic words and the passions and subtleties of a time which delighted in theological discussions. The pages and passages of that warfare are now yellow, dusty and not often turned, but there one may still recapture the ardor of the protagonists and feel them hot to his touch.

His most conspicuous service was in the field of Christian nurture. Calvinistic Puritanism had never known what to do with a little child — nor indeed had Calvin himself ever quite known, save to involve him in a mystery of divine decrees and occasionally with a heartless logic to carry these decrees to their issue in damnation. And it had never known how to save a child except by making him first an alien to the Kingdom of God and then bringing him in by the tour de force of a revival. Against all this Bushnell brought to bear the weight of his deep humanity and his high Christian faith, and an insight, new not only to the theology but to the educational psychology of his time, into the meanings and possibility of child nurture. He broke new ground in the whole field of Christian training, and all youth and the churches since are indebted to him in ways which cannot easily be overdrawn.

He did more than liberalize Christian faith for evangelical Protestantism. He touched its then dry bones with life and made it possible for succeeding generations of Christian ministers and teachers to say: "But I am free-born" — to whose grateful spirits he himself might make answer: "With a great

price obtained *I* this freedom." In general and to the time of the contemporaneous phase of American theological thought which has followed the World War, Bushnell's influence was felt and acknowledged by all progressive religious thinkers and reflected in the thinking of those who would not acknowledge it.

But he was first and always the preacher. His mind was entirely unified and consistent. His preaching and writing stemmed from one deep and vitally creative root. His theology informed his preaching, his preaching controlled his theology. For unless a doctrine could reach and change life, he had no use for it. He was never a popular preacher as Beecher and Spurgeon were, or cloistered as Newman. He needed to train those who heard him and create the minds and spirits to which he spoke. Given those conditions, his power was arresting. Only Newman could match him in the amplitude of his topics and the support they supplied his sermons. As Munger says, when his topic was announced the sermon was half preached. Many of his sermons have become classics: "Everyman's Life a Plan of God," "The Dignity of Human Nature Shown from Its Ruins," "The Hunger of the Soul," "The Capacity of Religion Extirpated by Desire," "Duty not Measured by Our Own Ability," "The Insight of Love."

Such noble themes were developed with a spacious and, in some passages, a grave magnificence. Bushnell had a gift for sublimated poetry which he seems to have restrained, but which often breaks through as sunlight through the clouds. He preached, as Munger says, with the direct approach — always to life. The age he inherited approached life through doctrine. He approached doctrine through life. His most famous sermon is "Everyman's Life a Plan of God." Its fame rests upon its strategic recasting of inherited Calvinism. Other sermons represent more truly his power as a preacher.

Out of so many choices I have chosen "The Power of an Endless Life" for its truly majestic amplitude, its far-ranging insights and the sublimity of conception for which its words and periods are a fitting garmenture.

THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE

Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

HEB. 7:16

THIS WORD "after" is a word of correspondence, and implies two subjects brought in comparison. That Christ has the power of an endless life in his own person is certainly true; but to say that he is made a priest after this power subjective in himself, is awkward even to a degree that violates the natural grammar of speech. The suggestion is different; viz., that the priesthood of Christ is graduated by the wants and measures of the human soul as the priesthood of the law was not; that the endless life in which he comes, matches and measures the endless life in mankind whose fall he is to restore; providing a salvation as strong as their sin, and as long or lasting as the run of their immortality. He is able thus to save unto the uttermost. Powers of endless life though we be, falling principalities, wandering stars shooting downward in the precipitation of evil, he is able to bring us off, re-establish our dismantled eternities, and set us in the peace and confidence of an eternal righteousness.

I propose to exhibit the work of Christ in this high relation, which will lead me to consider —

I. The power of an endless life in man, what it is and, as being under sin, requires.

II. What Christ, in his eternal priesthood, does to restore it.

I

The power of an endless life, what it is and requires. The greatness of our immortality, as commonly handled, is one of the dullest subjects, partly because it finds apprehension asleep in us, and partly because the strained computations entered into, and the words piled up as magnifiers, in a way of impressing the sense of its eternal duration, carry no impression, start no sense of magnitude in us. Even if we raise no doubt or objection, they do little more than drum us to sleep in our own nothingness. We exist here only in the germ, and it is much as if the life power in some seed, that, for example, of the great cedars of the west, were to begin a magnifying of its own importance to itself in the fact it has so long a time to live; and finally, because of the tiny figures it makes, and because the forces it contains are as yet unrealized, to settle inertly down upon the feeling that, after all, it is only a seed, a dull, insignificant speck of matter, wanting to be a little greater than it can. Instead, then, of attempting to magnify the soul by any formal computation on the score of time or duration, let us simply take up and follow the hint that is given us in this brief expression, the power of an endless life.

It is a power, a power of life, a power of endless life.

The word translated "power" in the text, is the original of our word "dynamic," denoting a certain impetus, momentum, or causative force, which is cumulative, growing stronger and more impelling as it goes. And this is the nature of life or vital force universally — it is a force cumulative as long as it continues. It enters into matter as a building, organizing, lifting power, and knows not how to stop till death stops it. We use the word "grow" to describe its action, and it does not even know how to subsist without growth. In which growth it lays hold continually of new material, expands in volume, and fills a larger sphere of body with its power.

Now these innumerable lives, animal and vegetable, at work upon the world, creating and new-creating, and producing their immense transformations of matter, are all immaterial forces or powers; related, in that manner, to souls, which are only a highest class of powers. The human soul cannot be more efficiently described than by calling it the power of an endless life; and to it all these lower immaterialities, at work in matter, look up as mute prophets, testifying, by the magical sovereignty they wield in the processes and material transformations of growth, to the possible forces embodied in that highest, noblest form of life. And sometimes, since our spiritual nature, taken as a power of life, organizes nothing material and external by which its action is made visible, God allows the inferior lives in given examples, especially of the tree species, to have a small eternity of growth, and lift their giant forms to the clouds, that we may stand lost in amazement before the majesty of that silent power that works in life, when many centuries only are given to be the lease of its activity.

The work is slow, the cumulative process silent — viewed externally, nothing appears that we name force, and yet this living creature called a tree, throbs internally in fullness of life, circulates its juices, swells in volume, towers in majesty; till finally it gives to the very word " life " a historic presence and sublimity. It begins with a mere seed or germ, a tiny speck so inert and frail that we might even laugh at the bare suggestion of power in such a loo of nothingness; just as at our present point of dullness and weakness, we can give no sound of meaning to anything said of our spiritual greatness, and yet that seed, long centuries ago, when the tremendous babyhood of Mahomet was nursing at his mother's breast, sprouted apace, gathered to itself new circles of matter, year by year and age after age, kept its pumps in play, sent up new supplies of food, piling length on length in the sky, conserving still and vitalizing all; and now it stands entire in pillared

majesty, mounting upward still, and tossing back the storms that break on its green pinnacles, a bulk immense, such as being felled and hollowed would even make a modern ship of war.

And yet these cumulative powers of vegetable life are only feeble types of that higher, fearfully vaster power, that pertains to the endless life of a soul — that power that known or unknown dwells in you and in me. What Abel now is, or Enoch, as an angel of God, in the volume of his endless life and the vast energies unfolded in his growth by the river of God, they may set you trying to guess, but can by no means help you adequately to conceive. The possible majesty to which any free intelligence of God may grow, in the endless increment of ages, is after all rather hinted than imaged in their merely vegetable grandeur.

II

Quickened by these analogies, let us pass directly to the soul or spiritual nature itself, as a power of endless growth or increment; for it is only in this way that we begin to conceive the real magnitude and majesty of the soul, and not by any mere computations based on its eternity or immortality.

What it means, in this higher and nobler sense, to be a power of life, we are very commonly restrained from observing by two or three considerations that require to be named. First, when looking after the measures of the soul, we very naturally lay hold of what first occurs to us, and begin to busy ourselves in the contemplation of its eternal duration. Whereas the eternal duration of the soul, at any given measure, if we look no farther, is nothing but the eternal continuance of its mediocrity or comparative littleness. Its eternal growth in volume and power is in that manner quite lost sight of, and the computation misses everything most impressive, in its future significance and history. Secondly, the growth of the soul is a merely spiritual growth, indicated by

no visible and material form that is expanded by it and with it as in the growth of a tree, and therefore passes comparatively unnoticed by many, just because they cannot see it with their eyes. And then again, thirdly, as the human body attains to its maturity, and, finally, in the decays of age, becomes an apparent limit to the spiritual powers and faculties, we drop into the impression that these have now passed their climacteric, and that we have actually seen the utmost volume it is in their nature ever to attain.

We do not catch the significance of the fact that the soul outgrows the growth and outlives the vigor of the body, which is not true in trees; revealing its majestic properties as a force independent and qualifiedly sovereign. Observing how long the soul-force goes on to expand after the body-force has reached its maximum, and when disease and age have begun to shatter the frail house it inhabits, how long it braves these bodily decrepitudes, driving on, still on, like a strong engine in a poorly timbered vessel, through seas not too heavy for it, but only for the crazy hulk it impels — observing this, and making due account of it, we should only be the more impressed with a sense of some inherent everlasting power of growth and progress in its endless life.

Stripping aside now all these impediments, let us pass directly into the soul's history, and catch from what transpires in its first indications the sign or promise of what it is to become. In its beginnings it is a mere seed of possibility. All the infant faculties are folded up, at first, and scarcely a sign of power is visible in it. But a doom of growth is in it, and the hidden momentum of an endless power is driving it on. And a falling body will not gather momentum in its fall more naturally and certainly, than it will gather force, in the necessary struggle of its endless life now begun. We may think little of the increase; it is a matter of course, and why should we take note of it? But if no increase or development appears, if the faculties all sleep as at the first, we take

sad note of that, and draw how reluctantly, the conclusion that our child is an idiot and not a proper man! And what a chasm is there between the idiot and the man; one a being unprogressive, a being who is not a power; the other a careering force started on its way to eternity, a principle of might and majesty begun to be unfolded, and to be progressively unfolded forever.

Intelligence, reason, conscience, observation, choice, memory, enthusiasm, all the fires of his inborn eternity are kindling to a glow, and, looking on him as a force immortal, just beginning to reveal the symptoms of what he shall be, we call him man. Only a few years ago he lay in his cradle, a barely breathing principle of life, but in that life were gathered up, as in a germ or seed, all these godlike powers that are now so conspicuous in the volume of his personal growth. In a sense all that is in him now was in him then, as the power of an endless life, and still the sublime progression of his power is only begun. He conquers now the sea and its storms. He climbs the heavens, and searches out the mysteries of the stars. He harnesses the lightning. He bids the rocks dissolve, and summons the secret atoms to give up their names and laws. He subdues the face of the world, and compels the forces of the waters and the fires to be his servants. He makes laws, hurls empires down upon empires in the fields of war, speaks words that cannot die, signs to distant realms and peoples across vast ages of time; in a word, he executes all that is included in history, showing his tremendous energy in almost everything that stirs the silence and changes the conditions of the world. Everything is transformed by him even up to the stars. Not all the winds, and storms, and earthquakes, and seas, and seasons of the world, have done as much to revolutionize the world as he, the power of an endless life, has done since the day he came forth upon it, and received, as he is most truly declared to have done, dominion over it.

And yet we have, in the power thus developed, nothing more than a mere hint or initial sign of what is to be the real stature of his personality in the process of his everlasting development. We exist here only in the small, that God may have us in a state of flexibility, and bend or fashion us, at the best advantage, to the model of his own great life and character. And most of us, therefore, have scarcely a conception of the exceeding weight of glory to be comprehended in our existence. If we take, for example, the faculty of memory, how very obvious is it that as we pass eternally on, we shall have more and more to remember, and finally shall have gathered in more into this great storehouse of the soul, than is now contained in all the libraries of the world. And there is not one of our faculties that has not, in its volume, a similar power of expansion. Indeed, if it were not so, the memory would finally overflow and drown all our other faculties, and the spirits, instead of being powers, would virtually cease to be anything more than registers of the past.

But we are not obliged to take our conclusion by inference. We can see for ourselves that the associations of the mind, which are a great part of its riches, must be increasing in number and variety forever, stimulating thought by multiplying its suggestives, and beautifying thought by weaving into it the colors of sentiment, endlessly varied.

The imagination is gathering in its images and kindling its eternal fires in the same manner. Having passed through many trains of worlds, mixing with scenes, societies, orders of intelligence and powers of beatitude — just that which made the apostle in Patmos into a poet, by the visions of a single day — it is impossible that every soul should not finally become filled with a glorious and powerful imagery, and be waked to a wonderfully creative energy.

By the supposition it is another incident of this power of endless life, that passing down the eternal galleries of fact and event, it must be forever having new cognitions and accumu-

lating new premises. By its own contacts it will, at some future time, have touched even whole worlds and felt them through and made premises of all there is in them. It will know God by experiences correspondently enlarged, and itself by a consciousness correspondently illuminated. Having gathered in, at last, such worlds of premise, it is difficult for us now to conceive the vigor into which a soul may come, or the volume it may exhibit, the wonderful depth and scope of its judgments, its rapidity and certainty, and the vastness of its generalizations. It passes over more and more, and that necessarily, from the condition of a creature gathering up premises, into the condition of God, creating out of premises; for if it is not actually set to the creation of worlds, its very thoughts will be a discoursing in world problems and theories equally vast in their complications.

In the same manner, the executive energy of the will, the volume of the benevolent affections, and all the active powers, will be showing, more and more impressively, what it is to be a power of endless life. They that have been swift in doing God's will and fulfilling his mighty errands, will acquire a marvelous address and energy in the use of their powers. They that have taken worlds into their love will have a love correspondently capacious, whereupon also it will be seen that their will is settled in firmness, and raised in majesty according to the vastness of impulse there is in the love behind it. They that have great thoughts, too, will be able to manage great causes, and they that are lubricated eternally in the joys that feed their activity, will never tire. What force, then, must be finally developed in what now appears to be the tenuous and fickle impulse, and the merely frictional activity of a human soul.

III

On this subject the Scriptures indulge in no declamation, but only speak in hints and start us off by questions, well

understanding that the utmost they can do is to waken in us the sense of a future scale of being unimaginable, and beyond the compass of our definite thought. Here they drive us out in the almost cold mathematical question — what shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Here they show us in John's vision, Moses and Elijah, as angels, suggesting our future classification among angels, which are sometimes called chariots of God, to indicate their excelling strength and swiftness in careering through his empire, to do his will. Here they speak of powers unimaginable as regards the volume of their personality, calling them dominions, thrones, principalities, powers, and appear to set us on a footing with these dim majesties. Here they notify us that it doth not yet appear what we shall be. Here they call us sons of God. Here they bolt upon us — But I said ye are gods; as if meaning to waken us by a shock! In these and all ways possible, they contrive to start some better conception in us of ourselves, and of the immense significance of the soul; forbidding us always to be the dull mediocrities into which, under the stupor of our unbelief, we are commonly so ready to subside. Oh, if we could tear aside the veil, and see for but one hour what it signifies to be a soul in the power of an endless life, what a revelation would it be!

But there is yet another side or element of meaning suggested by this expression, which requires to be noted. It looks on the soul as a falling power, a bad force, rushing downward into ruinous and final disorder. If we call it a principality in its possible volume, it is a falling principality. It was this which made the mighty priesthood of the Lord necessary. For the moment we look in upon the soul's great movement as a power, and find sin entered there, we perceive that everything is in disorder. It is like a mighty engine in which some pivot or lever is broken, whirling and crashing and driving itself into a wreck. The disastrous effects of sin

in a soul will be just according to the powers it contains, or embodies; for every force becomes a bad force, a misdirected and self-destructive force, a force which can never be restored, save by some other which is mightier and superior. What, in this view, can be more frightful than the disorders loosened in it by a state of sin?

And what shall we say of the result or end? Must the immortal nature still increase in volume without limit, and so in the volume of its miseries; or only in its miseries by the conscious depths of shame and weakness into which it is falling? On this subject I know not what to say. We do see that bad minds, in their evil life, gather force and expand in many, at least, of their capabilities, on to a certain point or limit. As far as to that point or limit, they appear to grow intense, powerful, and, as the world says, great. But they seem, at last, and apart from the mere decay of years, to begin a diminishing process; they grow jealous, imperious, cruel, and so far weak. They become little, in the girding of their own stringent selfishness. They burn to a cinder in the heat of their own devilish passion. And so, beginning as heroes and demigods, they many of them taper off into awfully intense but still little men — intense at a mere point; which appears to be the conception of a fiend. Is it so that the bitterness of hell is finally created? Is it toward this pungent, acrid, awfully intensified and talented littleness, that all souls under sin, are gravitating? However this may be, we can see for ourselves that the disorders of sin, running loose in human souls, must be driving them downward into everlasting and complete ruin, the wreck of all that is mightiest and loftiest in their immortality. One of the sublimest and most fearful pictures ever given of this you will find in the first chapter to the Romans. It reads like some battle among the gods, where all that is great and terrible and wild in the confusion, answers to the majesty of the powers engaged. And this is man, the power of an endless life, under sin. By what ade-

quate power, in earth or in heaven, shall that sin be taken away? This brings me to consider —

IV

What Christ, in his eternal priesthood, has done; or the fitness and practical necessity of it, as related to the stupendous exigency of our redemption.

The great impediment which the gospel of Christ encounters, in our world, that which most fatally hinders its reception, or embrace, is that it is too great a work. It transcends our belief, it wears a look of extravagance. We are beings too insignificant and low to engage any such interest on the part of God, or justify any such expenditure. The preparations made, and the parts acted, are not in the proportions of reason, and the very terms of the great salvation have, to our dull ears, a declamatory sound. How can we really think that the eternal God has set these more than epic machineries at work for such a creature as man?

My principal object, therefore, in the contemplations raised by this topic, has been to start some conception of ourselves, in the power of an endless life, that is more adequate. Mere immortality, or everlasting continuance, when it is the continuance only of littleness or mediocrity, does not make a platform or occasion high enough for this great mystery of the gospel. It is only when we see in human souls, taken as germs of power, a future magnitude and majesty transcending all present measures, that we come into any fit conception at all of Christ's mission to the world. Entering the gospel at this point, and regarding it as a work undertaken for the redemption of beings scarcely imagined as yet, of dominions, principalities, powers — spiritual intelligences so transcendent that we have, as yet, no words to name them — everything done takes a look of proportion; it appears even to be needed, and we readily admit that nothing less could suffice to restore the failing powers, or

stop the tragic disorders loosened in them by their sin. How much more if, instead of drawing thus upon our imagination, we could definitely grasp the real import of our being, that which hitherto is only indicated, never displayed, and have it as a matter of positive and distinct apprehension. This power of endless life — could we lay hold of it; could we truly feel its movement in us, and follow the internal presage to its mark; or could we only grasp the bad force there is in it and know it rushing downward, in the terrible lava-flood of its disorders, how true and rational, how magnificently divine would the great salvation of Christ appear, and in how great dread of ourselves should we hasten to it for refuge!

Then it would shock us no more that visibly it is no mere man that has arrived. Were he only a human teacher, reformer, philosopher, coming in our human plane to lecture on our self-improvement as men, in the measures of men, he would even be less credible than now. Nothing meets our want, in fact, but to see the boundaries of nature and time break away to let in a being and a power visibly not of this world. Let him be the Eternal Son of God and Word of the Father, descending out of higher worlds to be incarnate in this. As we have lost our measures, let us recover them, if possible, in the sense restored of our everlasting brotherhood with him. Let him so be made a priest for us, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life — the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person — God manifest in the flesh — God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. All the better and more proportionate and probable is it, if he comes heralded by innumerable angels, bursting into the sky, to congratulate their fallen peers with songs of deliverance — Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will toward men. Humbled to the flesh and its external conditions, he will only the more certainly even himself with

our want, if he dares to say — Before Abraham was, I am — all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Is he faultless, so that no man convinceth him of sin, revealing in the humble guise of humanity the absolute beauty of God; how could anything less or inferior meet our want? If he dares to make the most astounding pretensions, all the better, if only his pretensions are borne out by his life and actions. Let him heal the sick, feed the hungry, still the sea by his word. Let his doctrine not be human, let it bear the stamp of a higher mind and be verified and sealed by the perfection of his character. Let him be transfigured, if he may, in the sight of two worlds; of angels from the upper, and of men from this; that, beholding his excellent glory, no doubt may be left of his transcendent quality.

No matter if the men that follow him and love him are, just for the time, too slow to apprehend him. How could they see, with eyes holden, the divinity that is hid under such a garb of poverty and patience? How could they seize on the possibility that this man of sorrows is revealing even the depths of God's eternal love, by these more than mortal burdens? If the factitious distinctions of society pass for nothing with him, if he takes his lot among the outcast poor, how else could he show that it is not any tier of quality, but our great fallen humanity, the power of an endless life, that engages him? And when, with a degree of unconcern that is itself sublime, he says — The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me; how else could he convey so fitly the impression that the highest royalty and stateliest throne to him is simple man himself?

But the tragedy gathers to its last act, and fearful is to be the close. Never did the powers of eternity, or endless life in souls, reveal themselves so terribly before. But he came to break their force, and how so certainly as to let it break itself across his patience? By his miracles and reproofs, and quite as much by the unknown mystery of greatness in

his character, the deepest depths of malice in immortal evil are now finally stirred; the world's wild wrath is concentered on his person, and his soul is, for the hour, under an eclipse of sorrow; exceeding sorrowful even unto death. But the agony is shortly passed; he says, I am ready; and they take him, Son of God though he be, and Word of the Father, and Lord of glory, to a cross they nail him fast, and what a sign do they give, in that dire frenzy, of the immortal depth of their passion! The sun refuses to look on the sight, and the frame of nature shudders! He dies! It is finished! The body that was taken for endurance and patience, has drunk up all the gall of the world's malice, and now rests in the tomb.

No! There is more. Lo! He is not here, but is risen, he has burst the bars of death and become the first fruits of them that slept. In that sign behold his victory. Just that is done which signifies eternal redemption — the conquest and recovery of free minds, taken as powers dismantled by eternal evil. By this offering, once for all the work is finished. What can evil do, or passion, after this, when its bitterest arrows, shot into the divine patience, are by that patience so tenderly and sovereignly broken? Therefore now to make the triumph evident, he ascends, a visible conqueror, to the Father, there to stand as priest forever, sending forth his Spirit to seal, and testifying that he is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him.

V

This, in brief historic outline, is the great salvation. And it is not too great. It stands in glorious proportion with the work to be done. Nothing else or less would suffice. It is a work supernatural transacted in the plane of nature; and what but such a work could restore the broken order of the soul under evil? It incarnates God in the world, and what but some such opening of the senses to God or of God to the

senses, could reinstate him in minds that have lost the consciousness of him, and fallen off to live apart? What but this could enter him again, as a power, into the world's life and history? We are astonished by the revelation of divine feeling; the expense of the sacrifice wears a look of extravagance. If we are only the dull mediocrities we commonly take ourselves to be, it is quite incredible. But if God, seeing through our possibilities into our real eternities, comprehends, in the view, all we are to be or become, as powers of endless life, is there not some probability that he discovers a good deal more in us than we do in ourselves; enough to justify all the concern he testifies, all the sacrifice he makes in the passion of his Son? And as God has accurately weighed the worlds and even the atoms, accurately set them in their distances and altitudes, has he not also in this incarnate grace and passion, which offend so many by their excess, measured accurately the unknown depths and magnitudes of our eternity, the momentum of our fall, the tragic mystery of our disorder? And if we cannot comprehend ourselves, if we are even a mystery to ourselves, what should his salvation be but a mystery of godliness equally transcendent? If Christ were a philosopher, a human teacher, a human example, we might doubtless reason him and set him in our present scales of proportion, but he would as certainly do nothing for us equal to our want.

Inasmuch as our understanding has not yet reached our measures, we plainly want a grace which only faith can receive; for it is the distinction of faith that it can receive a medication it cannot definitely trace, and admit into the consciousness what it cannot master in thought. Christ therefore comes not as a problem given to our reason, but as a salvation offered to our faith. His passion reaches a deeper point in us than we can definitely think, and his Eternal Spirit is a healing priesthood for us, in the lowest and profoundest roots of our great immortality, those which we have

never seen ourselves. By our faith in him too as a mystery, he comes into our guiltiness, at a point back of all speculative comprehension, restoring that peace of innocence which is speculatively impossible; for how in mere speculation can anything done for our sin, annihilate the fact; and without that, how take our guilt away? Still it goes! We know, as we embrace him, that it goes! He has reached a point in us, by his mysterious priesthood, deep enough even to take our guiltiness away, and establish us in a peace that is even as the peace of innocence!

So, if we speak of our passions, our internal disorders, the wild, confused and even downward rush of our enthralled powers, he performs in a mystery of love and the Spirit, what no teaching or example could. The manner we can trace by no effort of the understanding; we can only see that he is somehow able to come into the very germ principle of our life, and be a central, regulating, new-creating force in our disordered growth itself. And if we speak of righteousness, it is ours, when it is not ours; how can a being unrighteous be established in the sense of righteousness? Logically, or according to the sentence of our speculative reason, it is impossible. And yet, in Christ, we have it! We are consciously in it, as we are in him, and all we can say is, that it is the righteousness of God, by faith, unto all and upon all them that believe.

But I must draw my subject to a close. It is a common impression with persons who hear, but do not accept, the calls of Christ and his salvation, that they are required to be somewhat less in order to be Christian. They must be diminished in quantity, taken down, shortened, made feeble and little, and then, by the time they have let go their manhood, they will possibly come into the way of salvation. They hear it declared that, in becoming little children, humble, meek, poor in spirit; in ceasing from our will and reason; and in giving up ourselves, our eagerness, revenge and passion —

thus, and thus only, can we be accepted; but, instead of taking all these as so many figures antagonistic to our pride, our ambition, and the determined self-pleasing of our sin, they take them absolutely, as requiring a real surrender and loss of our proper manhood itself. Exactly contrary to this, the gospel requires them to be more than they are — greater, higher, nobler, stronger — all which they were made to be in the power of their endless life.

These expressions, just referred to, have no other aim than simply to cut off weaknesses, break down infirmities, tear away boundaries, and let the soul out into liberty, and power, and greatness. What is weaker than pride, self-will, revenge, the puffing of conceit and rationality, the constringing littleness of all selfish passion? And in just these things it is that human souls are so fatally shrunk in all their conceptions of themselves; so that Christ encounters, in all men, this first and most unsurmountable difficulty; to make them apprised of their real value to themselves. For, no sooner do they wake to the sense of their great immortality than they are even oppressed by it. Everything else shrinks to nothingness, and they go to him for life. And then, when they receive him, it is even a bursting forth into magnitude. A new inspiration is upon them, all their powers are exalted, a wondrous inconceivable energy is felt, and, having come into the sense of God, which is the element of all real greatness, they discover, as it were in amazement, what it is to be in the true capacity.

A similar mistake is connected with their impressions of faith. They are jealous of faith, as being only weakness. They blame the gospel, because it requires faith, as a condition of salvation. And yet, as I have here abundantly shown, it requires faith just because it is a salvation large enough to meet the measures of the soul, as a power of endless life. And, oh, if you could once get away, my friends, from that sense of mediocrity and nothingness to which you are shut up, under the stupor of your self-seeking and your sin,

how easy would it be for you to believe. Nay, if but some faintest suspicion could steal into you of what your soul is, and the tremendous evils working in it, nothing but the mystery of Christ's death and passion would be sufficient for you. Now you are nothing to yourselves, and therefore Christ is too great, the mystery of his cross an offense. O, thou spirit of grace, visit these darkened minds, to whom thy gospel is hid, and let the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, shine into them! Raise in them the piercing question, that tears the world away and displays the grimace of its follies — What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

VI

I should do you a wrong to close this subject without conducting your minds forward to those anticipations of the future which it so naturally suggests. You have all observed the remarkable interest which beings of other worlds are shown, here and there in the Scripture, to feel in the transactions of this. These, like us, are powers of endless life, intelligences that have had a history parallel to our own. Some of them, doubtless, have existed myriads of ages, and consequently now are far on in the course of their development — far enough on to have discerned what existence is, and the amount of power and dignity there is in it. Hence their interest in us, who as yet are only candidates, in their view, for a greatness yet to be revealed. And the interest they show seems extravagant to us, just as the gospel itself is, and for the same reasons. They break into the sky, when Christ is born, chanting their All-Hail. They visit the world on heavenly errands and perform their unseen ministries to the heirs of salvation. They watch for our repentances, and there is joy among them before God, when but one is gathered to their company, in the faith of salvation. And the reason is that they have learned so much about the proportions and measures of things, which as

yet are hidden from us. These angels that excel in strength, these ancient princes and hierarchs that have grown up in God's eternity and unfolded their mighty powers in whole ages of good, recognize in us compeers that are finally to be advanced, as they are.

And here is the point where our true future dawns upon us. It doth not yet appear what we shall be. We lie here in our nest, unfledged and weak, guessing dimly at our future, and scarce believing what even now appears. But the power is in us, and that power is to be finally revealed. And what a revelation will that be! Is it possible, you will ask in amazement, that you, a creature that was sunk in such dullness, and sold to such trivialities in your bondage to the world, were, all this time, related to God and the ancient orders of his Kingdom, in a being so majestic!

How great a terror to some of you may that discovery be! I cannot say exactly how it will be with the bad minds, now given up finally to their disorders. Powers of endless life they still must be; but how far shrunk by that stringent selfishness, how far burned away, as magnitudes, by that fierce combustion of passion, I do not know. But, if they diminish in volume and shrink to a more intensified power of littleness and fiendishness, eaten out, as regards all highest volume, by the malice of evil and the undying worm of its regrets, it will not be so with the righteous. They will develop greater force of mind, greater volume of feeling, greater majesty of will and character, even forever. In the grand mystery of Christ and his eternal priesthood — Christ, who ever liveth to make intercession — they will be set in personal and experimental connection with all the great problems of grace and counsels of love, comprised in the plan by which they have been trained, and the glories to which they are exalted.

Attaining thus to greater force and stature of spirit than we are able now to conceive, they have exactly that supplied to their discovery which will carry them still further on, with

the greatest expedition. Their subjects and conferences will be those of principalities and powers, and the conceptions of their great society will be correspondent; for they are now coming to the stature necessary to a fit contemplation of such themes. The Lamb of Redemption and the throne of law, and a government comprising both will be the field of their study, and they will find their own once petty experience related to all that is vastest and most transcendent in the works and appointments of God's empire. Oh, what thoughts will spring up in such minds, surrounded by such fellow intelligences, entered on such themes, and present to such discoveries! How grand their action! How majestic their communion! Their praise how august! Their joys how full and clear! Shall we ever figure, my friends, in scenes like these? Oh, this power of endless life! — great King of Life, and Priest of Eternity, reveal thyself to us, and us to ourselves, and quicken us to this unknown future before us.*

* From *Sermons for the New Life* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899).

Matthew Simpson

1811 — 1884

MATTHEW SIMPSON was born in Cadiz, Ohio, June 21,* 1811; he died at Philadelphia, June 18, 1884. He came of mixed English and Scotch stock, and his ancestors reached America by way of north Ireland. He should, therefore, have been a Presbyterian save for the fact that his widowed grandmother heard John Wesley preach on one of his visits to Ireland. "Her heart was touched; she attended class and joined the Methodist Society." She finished that good work by taking all her children into the Methodist Church and living "to see every one of them occupying a respectable position in life." The family emigrated to America in 1793, sailing from Londonderry to Baltimore, the sea route the migrating Scotch-Irish mostly used.

From Baltimore and Philadelphia they spread fanwise through the entire Appalachian region and contributed to the American melting pot their prolific increase, their industrial shrewdness, their concern for religion and their highly militant dispositions. Matthew Simpson's heredity was written in every line of his face, was molded in the bony structure of his head and was in fact incarnate in him — body, mind and spirit. He was by inheritance a north-of-Ireland Presbyterian retempered by Wesleyanism. That made a combination to be reckoned with.

The Simpsons went from Baltimore due west by one of the two or three great land and river lanes of early American migration, and so to Cadiz in 1809. Theirs was a remote and

* June 21 on the authority of his autobiography. The *Century Dictionary of Names* says June 20.

forest-contained world housed in log cabins. The little settlements were widely separated. The connecting roads were mud trails through the woods and the swamps. Each village was self-sufficient for life — and for death. Life was demanding, labor wearing, mortality high. No other preacher presented in this book was nurtured as Simpson was, so near to nature's bare breast, in a world so new, so raw, so pregnant with destiny. But there was always a ferment of the mind. Litigation and theology were the chief intellectual interests of the pioneer. So the lawyer and the preacher must be trained — and the teacher. The frontier had a passion for education and continued in the wilderness the traditions of classical humanism, treasured books, did marvels with limited opportunities.

Matthew Simpson combined unusual faculties for mathematics and language. He was educated by absorption; all he asked was a book. He read the German Bible without a dictionary. His Latin and Greek he got almost surreptitiously from the textbooks of more fortunate youths. Three months at a poor college gave him Hebrew. He became a circuit rider by inner and outer destiny and broke the rules by getting married at the end of his third peripatetic year instead of the fourth. In due season he was given Liberty Street Church in Pittsburgh, his first and last settled charge. He left it to teach in a small Methodist college in western Pennsylvania and forsook his professor's chair to become president of Asbury University at Greencastle, Indiana.

Asbury University seems at that time to have been an unfenced campus, an unfinished building, a three-room academy and a pious and grandiose hope. Getting to Indiana was an adventure, creating a college in a frontier state an epic task since a supporting constituency had itself to be educated. Simpson's real campus was the whole state of Indiana, his classrooms were log churches and camp meetings, his academic groves were forests still wolf-haunted. Orpheus, they

say, once built a city by the music of his lyre. Matthew Simpson built Asbury University, and vastly more, by the sheer and magic power of his preaching.

By the time he was thirty he could probably have been matched in America for power of popular appeal in preaching only by Beecher; and Beecher also was in Indiana. An astonishing testimony to Simpson's astounding power began to spread through these backwoods and attended him with crescent laudation for forty years. It would be unbelievable, if it were not so solidly documented. Concede that he was preaching to an emotional people in an emotional age. Concede that his addresses during the Civil War made the passion of locked battlelines articulate and were punctuated by the crescendo of the guns of Gettysburg and the Wilderness. Concede exaggerations. And then, for all such conceding, something remains, hardly paralleled in the annals of the American pulpit.

Simpson carried men and women out of themselves. They laughed and wept and shouted. He was impassioned but there is no wild disorder of speech or thought in such records as are left. Instead, solidity of thought and nobility of diction. He remained master of himself and his art while his audiences were tempest-shaken. His published sermons and addresses are only the deposit of stenographic reports. He preached altogether extemporaneously, repeated naturally. Very likely no sermon was ever twice the same. Even so one hears as he reads them the sound of the wind in the treetops, the swelling surge.

His sermons sound the great notes of the evangel, strike the great chords of human response. His voice is said to have risen like the wind and the man himself visibly to have enlarged as he spoke. His power of dramatic imagination is universally acknowledged. Something beyond explanation was in action as with a strange detachment he brought crowds to their knees in prayer, or to their feet with a chorus of

amens or a tempest of cheers. His denomination used and honored him. He was for a while editor of the *Western Christian Advocate.* Presently he was bishop with America for his diocese. He saw his church divide beneath the strain of the controversy over slavery. He saw the passions of the period issue in national disunion. He became a trusted adviser of Lincoln and his addresses during the war sustained the morale of the north. He pronounced the funeral oration over Lincoln at Springfield. He spoke in London after Garfield's death. He exercised the same magical power over critical English audiences as over Indiana backwoodsmen. He gave the Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching in 1878–79,* and revealed as much as he could of his technique and discipline. Though from every printed page of his something is gone which can never be recaptured, his words still live.

I have chosen " The Victory of Faith " as both representative and widely acclaimed. The power of the concluding passages is often mentioned by those who remembered his preaching.

THE VICTORY OF FAITH

And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. I JOHN 5:4

EARTH IS a great battlefield. Its hills and valleys, its mountains and seashores, have witnessed fearful conflicts. Kingdoms have been lost and won, and the face of nations and of empires has been changed. Nor is this conflict con-

* Some of his illustrations of his own experience are of peculiar beauty. William H. Scott, president of Ohio State University, once told me of hearing Simpson during the Civil War. At the end of the address, he said, he found himself pounding the platform with his umbrella, with no recollection of how he got to the front of the hall — and Dr. Scott was not given to pounding platforms with umbrellas.

fined to the shock of armies. There is a contest old as Eden, which still goes on — the conflict between right and wrong, between error and truth. In this conflict every human being has a part. The soul is at stake, a soul of infinite value, of duration beyond the duration of empires. The temptations to wrong are many; they spring out of a corrupt nature. They are strengthened by evil habits, encouraged by wrong associations, fostered by a perverse public opinion. All the influences whether visible or invisible, that conspire to prevent a man from reaching his high ideal of purity are comprehended in the expression "the world," which is said by the apostle to lie in the wicked one, to be so opposed to holiness that to be a friend of the world is to be an enemy of God. We are assured, however, in Scripture that though the forces against us may be many, they that be for us are more than they that be against us. Men may have a victory, not a drawn battle, but a victory, clear, decisive, triumphant. Not only is this victory declared as possible, but the agency by which it is to be secured is distinctly stated: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

I

At the mention of faith, however, some are ready to make objection. They tell us that man's elevation is to be secured by the exercise of his own powers; that he is to seek it in self-development, self-culture, self-reliance; that prayer and faith are unworthy of him, because they prompt him to look beyond himself to some other, and possibly to some unseen, power; and that true manhood requires him to rely simply on the faculties with which his Creator has endowed him. I shall not decry self-development or self-reliance, they are essential to strong character; no man can succeed without them; but I do say that man never can rise to his proper position by his own unaided effort. He must call in and rely upon powers about or above him to gain his true position.

Were man to rely on his muscular strength alone, he never could surmount obstacles existing in nature; but he reaches out, seizes mechanical appliances, harnesses the beast of burden, utilizes the cascade, vaporizes water, seizes the sunbeam, sends his message by electricity. He triumphs when he lays his hand upon and employs for his service the elements about him.

I do not purpose to discuss faith in its dogmatic sense today. Taking it in its wider and generic application, I understand faith to be the supplement of sense; or, to change the phrase, all knowledge which comes not to us through our senses we gain by faith in others. If we look at the realm of knowledge, how exceedingly small and limited is that part acquired through our own senses; how wide is that we gain from other sources. Of this earth, we move over a small surface, we see a few mountains or valleys; but the widespread area from pole to pole is known to us solely by faith in others. Of history, how little do we know by personal contact; we have lived a few years, seen a few men, witnessed some important events; but what are these in the whole sum of the world's past! We know the past and its great events, the present in its multitudinous complications, chiefly through faith in the testimony of others. The realm of immediate or personal knowledge is a narrow circle in which these bodies move; the realm of knowledge derived through faith is as wide as the universe, as old as eternity. If, then, knowledge be power, how much more power do we gain through the agency of faith, and what elevation must it give to human character. As I survey nature I read this great law everywhere, that the wider one's connections, the higher one rises in the scale of being; or, conversely, the higher one rises the wider are one's connections. If, then, faith widens the connections, it elevates the man.

To illustrate this law, let us look about us. A living substance differs from inorganic matter chiefly in this, that it

has power to appropriate to itself something beyond it. The flower which appears for a day above the face of the earth and blooms and dies has in itself a law of growth and decay. It sends out the delicate rootlets through which it drinks in moisture and the elements in soil; it spreads its petals and absorbs sunlight and dew; it appropriates to itself something extraneous. The tall oak which stands upon the mountain, and wrestles with the storms of centuries, has the same law of growth, but it sends its roots into a wider area, it spreads its branches through a wider circumference, it absorbs more of earth's moisture, and drinks in more of the sunlight, and grows stronger and more enduring.

If we pass from vegetable to animal nature we note this distinction: the vegetable draws its sustenance from the point of its location and its limited neighborhood, and receives passively what comes in contact with itself; to the animal is given the power of motion, and it seeks beyond a fixed point for what may be nutritious. The polypi, though fastened to a rock, extend their branching arms to seize what may pass near. But as animal life advances in grade, the creature has the power of motion. The worm crawls from place to place; the fish, the beast, the bird have power of more rapid movement; and with this widening power they rise in the scale of being. How little do animals know which have but the sense of touch and taste and smell; how limited the circle in which they live! When the more perfect senses are added, how the area widens! The sense of hearing brings the animal into contact with objects miles away.

The sense of sight extends still farther, and in a certain mode the animal touches the distant parts of the universe. Knowledge comes to it by hearing, from far-off mountains or from the billows of the sea; by sight, from suns and stars millions of miles away. The animal rises as its connections widen. Man rises high above all other creatures as his connections grow wider; still, his hearing is no more acute than

that of the hound; but he can apply an instrument to his ear which makes even whispers resound with immense power. His sight is no more piercing than that of the eagle; but he grinds the glass, and he beholds a world of beings in the moss upon the rock, or in the drop of water. He grinds his glass again and the distant is brought near; new planets, new stars, shine in the firmament; the nebulae are resolved; the fleecy light becomes an assemblage of worlds, and beyond the reach of the unassisted eye he reads lessons of wisdom and power. Then to man has been given the capacity of speech, the power to create written language, to note the results of thought and observation, and hand them down to posterity.

Through this wonderful capacity man converses not merely with his daily associates, but he steps into his library and communes with Plato and Socrates, listens to the thunders of Demosthenes, is touched by the strains of a Hesiod or a Horace, draws near to the sacred mount and hears the voice of God, or walks into Eden as it was before sin had blighted our earth. Through revelation the invisible is made to appear, and he learns that there is the realm of the spirits of just men made perfect, that loved ones are above and about him, that angels are his servants, that though he dies he shall live again. Thus his connections extend from everlasting to everlasting. All ages, all nations, all events are brought into contact with him, and he rises infinitely above the animals that surround him.

II

If we follow this train of thought, we may ask in what respect do angels differ from man? Not in purity or in holiness merely, for in Paradise man was holy, and he shall be holy when redeemed through the sacrifice of Christ, and made an heir of heaven. But the angels are higher than man in this: they know more, they see more, they comprehend more, they can do more. Man is confined by this body to the earth; grav-

itation binds him, the elements encircle him. Angels are spirits, flames of fire; they are higher than man, they have wider connections. If there be ranks of angels; if there be archangel, or cherub, or seraph; if there be the bright and burning spirits about the throne, the gradation rests on their knowing or being able to do more than others.

And if we rise still higher we come at last to one great, uncreated being, the ineffable Jehovah, who fills all space, who extends through all time; with him every point is present; to him every moment of eternity is known. The nearer we approach him the higher we rise, the wider are our connections. Now, if faith widens so vastly the associations of a human being, must it not be the cause of his elevation; and may we not take a step further and say, there is no true human grandeur that is not gained through faith? Passing into practical life, illustrations of this fact are found everywhere; the distant, or the unseen, steadies and strengthens us against the rapid whirl of things around us.

The old men of this country were often called to pass swollen streams before bridges were built; mounted on the backs of strong horses they plunged fearlessly in. If they looked upon the rapid flow of the waters, their brains grew unsteady, they seemed to be carried against the current, and were in danger of falling and being drowned; but if they raised their eyes and looked at some tree or hilltop beyond, or on some rock that jutted from the shore, they passed quietly and safely over. It was the view of the distant that steadied them against the whirl of the present. The sailor boy is sent, in a storm, up the mast, and amidst the swinging cordage, to perform some task; if he looks below upon the rolling deck or the furious waves, his head swims, he is dashed down and is lost. How shall he be safe? The old sailor cries to him, " Look aloft, look aloft "; and if he can but see a star shining in the heavens, or the clouds, which are less unstable than the waters and the vessel, he grows steady and performs his work as calmly

as the child upon its mother's nursery floor. It is the view of the distant that steadies against the whirl of the present.

Is a man distinguished above his fellows for clearness of thought and comprehension of view, do we not say, he is a far-seeing man? The man who has a limited trade is engaged with those immediately about him, and the gossip and little rivalries and excitements of the town in which he lives powerfully affect him. The commercial trader sits at his desk, but he is arranging a cargo for China, though he never saw it, or is purchasing sugars from distant islands, or spices from the other side of the globe; the little circle of trade immediately about him scarcely disturbs him at all. His plans are far-reaching; he is looking for the return of his profits, not to-morrow, or next month, but next year or in a succession of years; and his wealth has accumulated through investments made with lands he never saw, and through the hands of men with whom he was never acquainted. It is faith that gives to him the knowledge and the confidence.

Take the process of education. There is in the streets a little boy, an orphan possibly, or the child of ignorant and vicious parents. He is neglected and is growing up in vice; how shall he be saved? You say, educate him. What is education? It is not teaching the number and forms of letters, or the marks upon a book; it is not the teaching of the combinations of these letters as they represent sounds, and form words. Education reaches far beyond this. I see that boy as he sits in the corner of a hearth while the pine knots are blazing in the winter's fire; associates are about him and the conversation is lively and interesting; but he hears it not; his eye is on the page, but his thoughts are not there. Where is he? He is crossing the Granicus with Alexander; he is climbing the Alps with Napoleon; he is driving into the depths of Russia with Charles XII; and he feels heroic emotions stirring within his bosom. An echo comes from his inner nature: "What man has done man may do"; and unconsciously the boy out-

grows the surroundings of the house and the plays of his associates, and there springs up in his heart the desire for fortune and fame. And thus education brings him into the companionship of the great and good and wise in distant lands and distant ages. It widens the circle of his thoughts, and he grows greater and stronger.

The same lessons are taught us if we look at those who attain eminence in the various walks of life. It is sometimes said, the poet is born, not made. Yet no one has attained great eminence as a poet who has not familiarized himself with the history of the past, with the associations of the present; who has not drunk in the thoughts of other minds, and whose soul has not swelled with the knowledge of the great deeds performed by other men. His theme is the hero, or the sage, or the traveler. The young poet pores over the history of the past, throwing over its actors and its deeds the colors of his imagination. I see him on a mountainside as the morning beams are just beginning to tinge the heavens, and as the light chases away the shadows; his eye notes every changing hue, traces the little streams which like silver lines mark the mountainside, now in perfect stillness, and then leaping and laughing in their rapid descent. His ear is filled with the music of the bird as it mounts heavenward with its early song. All nature to him glows with beauty, and he stands entranced while there spring from his heart the thoughts that breathe, and he utters them in numbers which charm mankind and live through ages.

III

The same lesson is seen in the life of the statesman. And when I use the word " statesman " I mean not the mere politician or the demagogue. The latter lives for the present, studies merely what is popular, how he may secure office for himself or gain votes, and is all things to all men. The statesman is quite another person; he is studious and thoughtful.

The young man reads history to know what men have done in the past; studies forms of government, how great questions have been discussed, great problems have been solved. He is unknown to his fellow men. He is living in the past; but there comes a time of trial; the ship of state is among breakers; there are quicksands, or there are rocks concealed, and the pilot knows not where to steer. Then the statesman comes to the rescue. He has made soundings. He knows where the sunken rocks are. He knows where the channel winds. He lays his hand on the helm and guides the ship of state until it reaches a safe harbor. He had seen the tops of far-off thoughts which common men never saw. He had been studying the distant and the past.

Two names are there well known among men which by their contrast throw light upon the lesson — Washington and the elder Napoleon. Both were brave men; both were true men; both loved their country and dared to expose their lives for their country's cause. Napoleon was probably the equal at least of Washington in intellect, his superior in education. Both of them were successful in serving the state. But there came a time that tried their souls. Napoleon saw the thrones of Europe tottering; their scepters in the hands of the timid and weak. Ambition prompted him to seize those thrones and distribute them among his family and friends. He was for a time the autocrat of the world; but there came a change, and he died a prisoner on St. Helena.

Washington was victorious in war. An unpaid soldiery clamored against the government, ambitious friends offered him the dictator's sword, but his monitor, conscience, stood by his side and told him of the greatness of a free people. He himself had crossed the Alleghenies, had been a surveyor in the mountains, and had looked out far on the western vales. It is said that Henry Clay, crossing the summits of the Allegheny mountains once, descended from the stage and stood with his cloak wrapped about him as if in the attitude of lis-

tening; some friends asked him, "Mr. Clay, for what are you listening?" and he replied, "I am listening for the footsteps of the coming millions." So Washington saw the coming millions and the coming glory of a free nation. He spurned the tempter and the temptation, put his sword in its scabbard, and went to be a peaceful farmer on the banks of the Potomac.

Thus he was not only first in war, but first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen. When Washington died the tears of a nation were shed, and his name rises brighter and brighter as the ages wear away. Wherever a struggling nation aspires for freedom the name of Washington is on the lips of the people. Napoleon was charmed with the near, Washington with the remote. See we not the same in science? A few years ago among the young men of Paris there was a thoughtful student. He was not found much in society. He was alone, pursuing investigations, resolving formulas; looking away out into the heavens he had seen traces of some planetary disturbance, and he desired to solve the mystery. His friends said to him, "Why prison yourself in your study? Come where beauty smiles and wit sparkles, come to the gay salons, find friends and joy." But he was deaf to their solicitations. Day after day, night after night, he is absorbed in his calculations. And I see him as he counts up the last column, as he resolves the last formula, and throwing down his paper, he says, "There is a new world and I have found it."

He publishes in the papers his belief in the existence of a new planet, and asks the astronomers of Europe to turn their telescopes to a certain part of the heavens. Doubtfully that evening the telescope swept that region of the sky, and the stars were noted. The next evening and the next like observations were taken, and it was discovered that there was one little star that did seem to have moved. The new planet was found, and the name of Leverrier shall shine among the stars of heaven as long as those heavens endure. He had faith

in the distant, in the immutability of the laws of science; and for that faith he rejected the pleasures of a moment.

IV

If, then, through faith such excellence is given in every department of life, in every stage of society, why should it not be so in the realms of morals and religion? Why should not faith join us to the good and the pure of past ages? Why should we not listen to the precepts of virtue and religion as well as to the songs of the poet or the strains of the orator? Man, in his inner nature, feels that the stains of sin are on him. He is captured oftentimes by passion; he is led where he knows his feet should not go; he has said to himself a thousand times he would be better, and yet sins again.

What shall he do? Where shall he go? Carried away by the force of passion, drawn by the influences of association, governed by the maxims of the evil world, he ever slides downward; but he looks into the past, stands at the foot of the mountain and hears the law of God, draws near to Calvary and beholds one dying for him, stands where the prophet Isaiah stood, and amidst the darkness which shrouds the cross he is able to say, "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." And there comes from Jesus a peace that cheers and strengthens, and the stain of his sin and the dominion of his passions fade away.

Man wants to be reconciled to God; wants to know that the past is forgiven. Have you not seen at home a little girl who always welcomed, in the evening, the return of father? She met him laughingly at the door, or bounded to the gate to throw herself into his arms. One evening he comes home, and she is not at the gate or at the door; but as he enters he sees her in a corner of the room, absorbed and scarcely willing to speak to him. He learns the cause; she has disobeyed him, has done during the day what he has told her not to do, and she fears to meet him. Human nature is the same now as

when Adam hid from the presence of God; the consciousness of wrong makes us unwilling to meet those whom we have offended. But the father calls the little girl to him, takes her on his knee, shows her the wrong she has done, points out its evil, chides her until he sees she is sincerely penitent. Sorrow fills her heart; it throbs with anguish. She promises to do so no more, and with downcast eye and falling tear her little heart seems near breaking, when the father says, " My child, I forgive you." What a change! She raises her face, throws her arms around his neck, imprints a kiss upon his cheek, and says, " My father." She is reconciled to her father; and now she draws near to him. Just so with our hearts when God draws us to himself and says, " Your sins, which are many, are all forgiven you." The sense of guilt passes away, and the first impulse of the soul is to say " Abba, Father."

And this view of the distant restrains passion and overcomes fear. The young man who has left his father's house on the farm, and has gone to the city to make his fortune, is often enticed to evil. The theater charms, the house that leads to the gates of death allures; but as he passes along the street and listens to the music, the memory of his sainted mother comes to him, and then that other thought of responsibility to God so fills his heart that he turns away from the enticements of sin. The thought of the distant delivers him from the power of passion. Is the soul in trouble? Does he despair of life? Does he give up all thought of friends on earth? Is he ready for suicide? It seems dark about him. But when the distant is brought to his view, the star of Bethlehem breaks on his vision, the thought comes to him as to Hagar of old, " Thou God seest me." I have often felt that the ordinary manner of quoting this verse, " Thou God seest me," does not present it as Hagar said it. She knew that God saw Abraham and Sarah; she knew the divine care and protection were given to him; but when, in the wilderness and in danger of death, God's providence was manifested to her, it affected her heart,

and she cried out, "Thou God seest *me*"; me, the poor, the unworthy, the unregarded.

It was the sense of divine compassion condescending so much as to look at her that soothed her heart. And when sickness comes, when strength declines, when death is near, when loved ones are carried away, how faith comes to our aid! We shall see our friends again. We can lay them in the grave; we know they are safe with God. We ourselves can die with comfort and even with joy if we know that death is but a passport to blessedness, that this intellect, freed from all material chains, shall rise and shine. If I know that I shall be as an angel, and more; if I shall behold all God has made; if he shall own me for his son and exalt me to honor in his presence, I shall not fear to die, nor shall I dread the grave where Christ once lay.

V

Thus it is faith in the distant inspires, cheers, strengthens. And yet there are those who tell us that the religion of Christ is fitted only for the poor, the aged, the weak; that it may do for women; it may do for ignorant men; but for man — strong, vigorous, educated man — there is something grander and higher. We are told that this religion is one of the things of the past, and that it is to fade away before the light of the present age. May I ask my skeptical friend what he will offer me in its place? What can he give me instead of my faith? I am willing to accord to him all he can desire, all he can claim. I give full credit to whatever unaided reason may prove, or scientific investigation may find. I delight in the refinements of literature, in the inventions of art; but what will be the substitute for faith?

The genius of infidelity comes near me and offers me her hand. I cheerfully take it. She leads me through this earth, shows me its blooming flowers, and calls them by name, takes me through the forests and shows me the gigantic trees, roams

with me through the animal kingdom and points out to me the exquisite adaptations of every part of nature, and I learn it all with joy from her lips; passes with me through society, explains its customs, its history, teaches me its languages, and I learn them all. She digs into the earth and reveals to me the rocks in their order of superposition, what the fossils teach of old catastrophes, and of wonderful ages; mounts with me into the heavens, opens to me the solar system so harmoniously and beautifully arranged; carries me beyond that system to numberless other systems whose suns are but the fixed stars I see; I go with her to the nebulae and look at the vast worlds that compose them; away to the fleecy cloud where light just trembles on the verge of shade; away to the suburbs of the universe, and when I have reached the last star and have sat me down, I still pant for more. I look up into the face of my guide and say, "Is this all?" And she asks, "Is not this enough? Are there not beauties of earth and beauties of heaven enough to satisfy the longing soul? Is there not wisdom and power and skill so manifold, so conspicuous, everywhere as to occupy the thought and fill the heart?" Yet still, somehow, there is a void within.

The genius of infidelity leaves me and the genius of Christianity comes to my side. She too takes me by the hand, and I go with her through the same earth, past the same flowers, the same rocks and forests and hills; takes me over the seats of the nations of the earth and teaches me the same languages; takes me through the domain of the sciences and adds one more, the science of salvation; teaches me the languages of earth, and adds one more, the language of heaven. She mounts with me to the skies; I drink in light from the same sun, pass to the same fixed stars, resolve the same nebulae, and away out again unto the last star where my former guide left me. And I gaze into the face of the genius of Christianity and ask, "Is this all?" What a look of pity and love she casts upon me as she says: "Is this all? This is but the portico; it

is but the threshold; it is the entrance to the Father's house." And she puts the glass of faith in my hand, and I look through it, and away beyond the stars, away beyond the multiplied systems, I see the great center, the throne of God, about which all things move — the great central point of the universe. And as I look there is One upon the throne; he is my brother; and I look again, and my name is written on his hands; and I cry out with ecstasy:

> Before the throne my surety stands,
> My name is written on his hands.

It is my title to a place in heaven; and there, when earth shall have passed and its events shall have closed, I shall have a home forever.

What can infidelity do for me that Christianity does not do? The same great scenes, the same great facts, the same great creation, all its parts: but Christianity whispers, " Your Father made them all, and made them for you." And a new light invests the world, and a new joy thrills through my heart. Oh, let others wrap themselves, if they may, in the chilly garb of doubt; let them, if they will, lose themselves in the mists of skepticism; but give me the faith that recognizes a duty, that shows me a Father, that points me to an elder Brother who cries out: " I am the resurrection and the life," and then I shall have the assurance that " for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." *

* From *Sermons by Bishop Matthew Simpson,* edited from shorthand reports by George R. Crooks, D.D. (New York: Harper & Bros., 1885).

John Caird

1820 — 1898

JOHN CAIRD is somewhat overshadowed in the standard sources of biography by his elder brother, Edward Caird. Few families are so fortunate in brothers so distinguished. John was born at Greenock, Scotland, December 15, 1820. He died in the house of his brother in Greenock on July 30, 1898. His father was an engineer of distinction and after graduation from Greenock schools the son served in the office of his father's firm and " gained a practical knowledge of several departments of engineering." He next studied in Glasgow University, winning high honors, went back to his engineering, studied at the university again and won this time a prize for poetry. He was not meant to be a superintendent of chain makers. After the completion of his university and divinity courses he became a minister of the Church of Scotland. He was first minister of Lady Yester's, Edinburgh, where the content of his preaching and its finished style won immediate recognition from perhaps the most exacting of " sermon-tasters."

Eight years in the country parish of Errol, which he sought for quiet and study, followed. These were studious years and years of increasing recognition. In 1857 he preached before the queen at Balmoral and the sermon was published at her majesty's command. Naturally it sold in enormous quantities and on other grounds than royal command, since Dean Stanley considered it " the greatest single sermon of the century " (which would confirm the queen as a good judge of preaching).

Caird was next at Park Church, Edinburgh, for five years; then professor of theology in Glasgow University, and finally

its principal, an office he adorned by a "rare business capacity, . . . tact, urbanity and judgment." (That was his engineer's inheritance.) He favored and furthered the university education of women, enriched theological thought, rejoiced in the honors of the academic world and died the day before the date he had set for his retirement from the principalship.

He was not so voluminous a writer as his brother Edward: only two posthumous volumes of sermons and a course of Gifford Lectures. The Cairds were strongly under the influence of Hegel and that influence shows in the organization of John Caird's sermons — thesis, antithesis, synthesis, almost invariably. John Caird in his academic gown and hood is an arresting figure. There is a rugged, leonine quality in the poise of his head. The thinker's forehead balances the orator's full-lipped mouth. He was master of a noble style whose distinction is its unfailing elevation of thought and diction. Principal Caird himself selected the sermon which follows to be published in the volume called *Scotch Sermons*. He must, therefore, have believed it highly representative. I have found it for twenty years now to bear much rereading.

CORPORATE IMMORTALITY

These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. HEB. 11:39, 40

THERE IS something at once of exaltation and of sadness in the words with which the writer of this book closes his recapitulation of the glorious roll of the saints and martyrs and heroes of ancient times. They were men "of whom the world was not worthy." They were inspired with a noble en-

thusiasm for great ends, with dauntless fortitude and self-devotion, with an unquenchable faith in things spiritual, with high hopes for the future of humanity. But, judged by the outward eye, their life was a failure: they never attained to the end of their aspirations; one after another, like breaking waves on the strand of time, they were compelled to succumb to the universal limits of human endeavor. In the midst of their noble struggles they were constrained in succession to yield to the inevitable summons, their work unaccomplished, their hopes unfulfilled, the dearest object of their lives nothing better than a far-off goal. " These all died in faith," it is written, " not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off." And again, " These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise."

At first sight, therefore, the language of the text is simply a repetition of the old refrain, " Vanity of vanities," with which writers, inspired and uninspired, have summed up their trite moralizings over the evanescence and incompleteness of human life. The saddest aspect of human existence, this writer seems to say, is, not simply that it is full of care and sorrow and trouble, but that it suggests the impression of frustration, abortiveness, incompleteness. We never receive the promise. We never are the thing we seem designed to be. There are in our nature the beginnings and materials of great things, but they are never realized. The foundation is ever grander than the superstructure, the outline than the picture, the promise than the fulfillment. We can form soaring ideals of individual and social perfection, but they only serve to throw contempt on the poverty and meanness of our actual life. Human nature seems to be a thing of boundless possibilities but of miserable performances, of capacities which are never, or only feebly and partially, developed, of desires, hopes, aspirations, to which, even when the will to realize them is present, the poor result which our brief life permits us to reach is ludicrously disproportionate.

Moreover, it is precisely in the case of the best and greatest of men that this incompleteness is most marked. If all men were, what so many seem to be, creatures of mere animal and selfish desires, finding all the satisfaction they care for in eating, drinking, money-making, in dress and gossip and foolish display and petty social rivalries and triumphs, there would be no sense of incongruity in the brevity of human life. There would be nothing to startle or surprise us in the fact that an existence of such mean and shallow aims should cease forever when its brief earthly career had run out. Far less, indeed, than threescore years and ten suffices often to play out that poor plot, to exhaust its whole interest and significance.

But it is when we turn to contemplate human life in its nobler representatives that the sense of unfulfilled promise forces itself on our notice. Its minds of rare and piercing intelligence, filled with the ever growing thirst of knowledge, catching glimpses on all sides of unexplored regions of thought, into which it would be their delight to penetrate, and who seem to themselves, after the labors of a lifetime, to be only standing on the very outskirts of the realm of truth; its great originative intellects, capable of striking out new discoveries, of penetrating into the secrets of nature, of discerning the wants of society, and of framing comprehensive plans for its amelioration and progress; or, finally, its beautiful, heroic, saintly spirits, refined and purified by the discipline of years, exalted above all that is selfish and sensual, and sometimes doing deeds at the mere recounting of which our hearts thrill with involuntary admiration, and which are the silent prophecy of an unrevealed splendor in the spiritual nature of man — it is in the case of such natures as these that the cruel limits of life strike us most palpably.

The whole being of such men seems molded on a scale that is pure waste and extravagance, measured by the few and rapid years of our individual life. The infinite hunger for truth and goodness, the thoughts that wander through eter-

nity, the feelings of love and adoration which point to an object nothing less than infinite — it seems strange and monstrous that these inexhaustible capacities have no longer time for satisfaction than the lust or appetite which an hour will cloy. Of what use the vision of infinite perfection, if the same fell stroke is to shatter it alike with the poorest dream of worldly success? What meaning is there in the capacity of conceiving and living for objects the very least of which it would require many lives to accomplish — in a mind filled with great designs, the results of which it needs generations to develop, or fired with enthusiasm for the progress of the race in civilization and goodness — when soon and forever it shall cease to have any more a part in all that is done beneath the sun?

I

Now it is this view of human life which in the latter clause of our text the sacred writer seems to meet. Is our life indeed an incomplete and broken thing? Is human existence but at the best a splendid failure? Is the promise which our nature contains never fulfilled? The common answer, as we all know, to such questions is that which finds in the notion of the " immortality of the soul " the solution of the difficulty. The life that seems so incomplete is only a part of man's duration. It will receive its complement in a future world. But whatever truth there is in the notion of individual immortality, it was obviously not this, but another and different idea, which was before the mind of the writer of our text, as that in which he found consolation for the fragmentariness and imperfection of the life of man. " These all died in faith," he writes, " not having received the promises." " These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise." Their life, replete with immortal hopes, instinct with the spirit and promise of a splendid future, was abruptly terminated. But it was not really so. The promise was not

left unfulfilled, the continuity was not broken. Their story has not been left without a sequel. The life they lived is one that is never broken, that never dies, that is ever deepening, developing, ever through the ages advancing to its consummation. Every one of these ancient saints and martyrs, he seems to say, has had a share in the growing life of humanity, and in the Christian church of his own day he sees only the flower and fruit of the same plant of which they were the seed or germ, the maturity of the same organic life of which the church of a former day was the childhood or youth. These passed away, he exclaims, and life in them was one of unfulfilled promise. But of that promise we are the fulfillment: "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

Let us for a moment consider what is involved in this view of the spiritual life of man, and try to gather from it the lessons with which it is fraught.

The imperfection which this writer ascribes to the individual lives of a past time arises necessarily from this: that it constitutes the very grandeur and nobleness of human life to be incapable of a purely individual perfection, and that each successive generation can say of the men and the ages that are past, "They without us could not be made perfect."

And to see this you have only to consider how all existences rise in the scale of nobleness just in proportion as they are incapable of individual perfection. The stones which are intended to form part of a building lose their separate unity and any independence which might be attributed to them as stones. Taken apart, they might seem unmeaning or even grotesque and unshapely in form and outline. But it would be a foolish and vain thing to try to give them a kind of individual completeness by rounding off a ragged edge here or filling up an unsightly gap there. It is just that which makes them individually imperfect that lends to them the capacity of contributing to a higher perfection. When the stone is

built into the shaft or column, or when around and above the unsightly structural fragment rise the other portions which form its complement in the unity of some fair and stately edifice, we perceive how, lacking or losing individual completeness, it has become a sharer in a greater and higher completeness, a necessary contributor to and participant in the perfection and beauty of the whole.

That the incapacity of individual perfection is the measure of inherent dignity and excellence is still more clearly seen when we take the example of the living organism. Here, too, as in the previous illustration, we have a multiplicity of individual parts or members, each of which, taken apart by itself, has no worth or significance. Here, too, that which would be a mere fragment, a maimed or mutilated thing, if disunited from the other members, receives, in its union with them, a share in that larger life, in that symmetry, order, proportion, that excellence and beauty of diversity in unity, which belongs to the organic whole. It is in the absolute surrender of any isolated existence, in the fulfillment of its function, as existing for and contributing to the welfare and growth of the other parts of the organism, that the individual member or organ received back into itself the fullness of a richer and ampler existence. Its own perfection is impossible without them. So long as in the living organism any one part or member is undeveloped, there is something lacking to the perfection and happiness of the rest. They without it cannot be made perfect.

Lastly, there is this peculiarity in the final perfection of the organism, that it is reached, not, as in the former example, by accretion, but by the perpetual change and renewal of its elements — by absorption and development. As it rises through its successive stages, the materials of which it is composed do not remain, like the stones of a building, fixed and permanent, one stone or series of stones superimposed on another, each, from foundation to copestone, continuing to the

last what it was at the beginning. On the contrary, wherever there is life, its earliest beginnings are present indeed, but in a far more intimate and subtle way, in the beauty and perfection of its latest and highest form. Seed or germ, rising stem, leaf and blossom, fruit and flower, do not continue side by side; the last is the perfection of the first, but it is a perfection attained by unresting mutation, by the seeming extinction and absorption of all that went before.

When you have reached the rich profusion of summer, the tender grace of the vernal woods is a thing that is gone; when you gather the fruit, the gay blossom has passed away. And each successive phase of the living organism, as it passes from the embryo to the full-grown frame of manhood, is the vital result of all that it has been. The past lives in it — it could not be what it now is but for the past — but nothing of that past remains as it was; it does remain, but it remains as absorbed, transformed, worked up into the very essence of a new and nobler being. The unity of the fully developed life gathers up into it, not by juxtaposition or accumulation, but in a far deeper way, the concentrated results of its whole bygone history. Thus the nobleness of the imperfect life lies in its very imperfection. It is greater than even the most complete and finished of material things, because it is full of yet unfulfilled promise, because the possibilities of an ever advancing progress are concealed in it, because it contains in it the promise and prophecy of a future without which it cannot be made perfect.

II

Now it is in this idea, rather than in that of a merely individual immortality, that the writer of the passage before us finds the explanation of the seeming incompleteness and evanescence of human life. It is here that he seeks the solution of that contrast of greatness and littleness, of nobleness and meanness, of beginnings so full of promise and results so poor

and insignificant, on which moralists in all ages have been fain to dwell. Regarded from the individual point of view, human life is the paradoxical thing which such reflections make it to be. Individual happiness, individual perfection, are never attained; but it is, he declares, the very greatness and glory of man's nature to be incapable of it. The key to the riddle of human life, the explanation of the scale on which our nature is constructed, of the boundlessness of its hopes, the inexhaustibleness of its desires, of its eager longing for a larger, fuller, more lasting life, of the splendor of its ideals, and the dissatisfaction with their best attainments which the noblest spirits feel, is this: that he who lives nobly and wisely, who rises above the narrow life of sense to identify himself with that which is universal and infinite, is sharer in a life of humanity that is never arrested, and shall never die.

It needs little reflection to perceive that the order of things in which we live is not constructed on the principle that we are sent into this world merely to prepare for another, or that the paramount aim and effort of every man should be to make ready for death and an unknown existence beyond the grave. On the contrary, in our own nature and in the system of things to which we belong, everything seems to be devised on the principle that our interest in the world and human affairs is not to terminate at death. It is not, as false moralists would have us believe, a mere illusion, a proof only of the folly and vanity of man, that we do not, and cannot, feel and act as if we were to have no concern with this world the moment we quit it. It is not a mere irrational impulse that moves us when, in the acquisition of knowledge, in the labors of the statesman and legislator, in the houses we build, the trees we plant, the books we write, the works of art we create, the schemes of social amelioration we devise, the educational institutions we organize and improve, we act otherwise than we should do if our interest in all earthly affairs were in a few brief years to come to an end. It is not due to a universal

mistake that we work for a thousand ends the accomplishment of which we shall not live to see; that the passions we feel are more intense, the efforts we put forth immeasurably greater, than if we were soon and forever to have done with it all. Even the desire of posthumous fame, which has been the theme of a thousand sarcasms and satirical moralizings, the passion that impels us to do deeds and create works which men will be thinking of and honoring when we are gone, does not rest on a mere trick of false association which your clever psychologist can explain so deftly, but is the silent ineradicable testimony of our nature to the share we have in the undying life of humanity.

So, again, it is no mere logical abstraction which rises before the mind when we talk of a national life, which embraces and transcends that of the individuals who pertain to it, and which, while they seem to come and go like shadows, goes on broadening, deepening, developing in knowledge and power and freedom. It is no imaginative fiction, for example, but a sober fact to which we refer, when we speak of the silent, steady growth of that organic unity, that system of ordered freedom, which we designate the Constitution of England; or when we say that that constitution is the collective result of all that was valuable in the intellectual and moral and religious life of the myriads who, from the first pioneers of England's civilization downwards, have contributed to her progress; that all that her poets have sung, and philosophers taught, and statesmen, legislators, warriors, patriots, have achieved — nay, all that has been accomplished by thousands of nameless and unhonored lives which have been poured out like water in the cause of her civil and religious freedom — all this, assimilated and transmuted into the very bone and fiber of her social existence, lives yet in that great and still growing personality, the national life of our country.

And when we take a wider range it is no mere figure of speech when we say that there is another and still grander per-

sonality, which comprehends within it the life of nations as well as of individuals, and which, when the place of nations knows them no more, when their function in the providential order of the world has long been finished, and their glory and splendor is a thing of the past, retains in it the elements of spiritual good which it was their vocation to work out, gathered up and transfused into that undying life of humanity without which they could not be made perfect. The perfection of man is not the perfection of the Jew, nor of the Greek, nor of the Roman; but there is a richer, fuller, more complex life, into which the Hebrew consciousness of holiness and sin, the ideal beauty of the Greek, the sense of law and order which Rome left as her legacy to mankind, flow together and are blended in the unity of the Christian civilization of the modern world.

And that too, in its turn, is still far short of that ideal perfection which our Christian faith reveals, and for the realization of which it calls us to live and labor. Eighteen centuries ago a vision of human perfection, a revelation of the hidden possibilities of our nature, broke upon the world in the person and life of Jesus Christ; and as we contrast with this the highest attainments which the best of men or communities have yet reached, it seems an ideal towards which as a yet far distant goal, with slow and stumbling steps, humanity is tending. Yet for this at least the belief in it suffices in the hearts that have become penetrated with the sense of its sublime reality and beauty — to assure them that whatever of greatness or goodness in the long course of ages humanity has attained, is but an augury of that splendid future which is yet in store for it. For no ideal of a perfect state, no dream of a golden age or paradise restored which has ever visited the imagination of genius, or risen before the rapt gaze of inspired seer or prophet, can surpass that future of universal light and love which Christianity encourages us to expect as the destiny of our race — that time when human society shall be perme-

ated through and through with the spirit of Jesus Christ, and the whole race, and every individual member of it, shall rise to the point of moral and spiritual elevation which that life represents, when we shall " all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

It is then in this idea that we find, as I have said, the true solution of that contrast between the largeness of human desires and hopes and the brevity of human life, between our far-reaching aims and aspirations and the contempt which death seems to pour on them. Death does not pour contempt on them. You can think and desire and work for more than the petty interests of your brief individual life, because you are more and greater than the individual, because it is possible for you to share in a universal and undying life, with the future of which your most boundless aspirations are not incompatible. It is little indeed that each of us can accomplish within the narrow limits of his own little day. Small is the contribution which the best of us can make to the advancement of the world in knowledge and goodness. But slight though it be, if the work we do is real and noble work, it is never lost; it is taken up into and becomes an integral moment of that immortal life to which all the good and great of the past, every wise thinker, every true and tender heart, every fair and saintly spirit, have contributed, and which, never hasting, never resting, onward through the ages is advancing to its consummation.

Live for your own petty interests and satisfactions, waste the treasure of an immortal nature on the lust of the eye and the lust of the flesh and the pride of life, and death will indeed be the destroyer of all your hopes and ambitions. But live for the good of others, live to make your fellow men wiser and happier and better, take part with those nobler spirits of all time who have striven for the rectification of human wrongs, the healing of human wretchedness, the redemption

of human souls from evil, the advancement of the world in knowledge and wisdom and goodness — live for these ends, and the whole order and history of the world, and that gospel of heaven's grace in which we believe as the revelation of God's purpose and plan for our race, must prove a fable, if your hopes and aspirations be doomed to disappointment.

III

But what, after all, avails for me, does anyone ask, this idea of a future perfection of humanity, these hopes and endeavors for a world in whose good or ill I shall soon have no place or part? It is not the immortality of the race, but my own, that is the great and all-important question for me — not whether the progress of mankind shall go on in a world I am so soon to quit, but whether there is another world beyond the grave, and whether death shall find me prepared for it. Even if it be true that this dream of a perfect social state is in some far distant day to be realized in this world, what personal interest can I have in a perfection and happiness I shall never know and in which I shall never participate?

I answer, that the idea of the text, far from destroying, only lends new significance and reality to, the hope of a personal immortality. It leaves the arguments for immortality which reason and Christian faith suggest precisely what they were; only it bids us think of that immortality, not as a vague and shadowy state of blessedness in some unknown existence beyond the grave, but as the realization of those possibilities of perfection which our nature contains, and which are present here and now, ready to be elicited in the earthly life of man. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises." That for which these ancient heroes and martyrs lived and labored, that which would be to them the crown and consummation of their dearest hopes and the reward of their sacrifice and self-devotion, was not a heaven of dreamy isolated happiness, to which at the hour of death they should withdraw, no

longer to be affected by the struggles and sorrows of humanity. They toiled and suffered and died for the good of mankind; their dearest, deepest desires were not for selfish happiness here or hereafter, but for the redemption of the world from evil; this was the heaven they longed for, and the bliss of any other heaven would be incomplete without it.

And we too, if we inherit their spirit, shall feel that for the heaven we seek we need not fly away on the wings of imagination to some unknown region of celestial enjoyment where we shall summer high in bliss heedless of mankind — where, lost in seraphic contemplation, steeped in voluptuous spiritual enjoyment, we shall forget or be unaffected by the good or evil of the world we have left. The materials of our heaven, the elements of that glorious future in which we hope one day to share, are present here, within us and around us, in our very hands and in our mouths. The Divine and Eternal are ever near us. God does not dwell in some far-off point of space; he is not more present anywhere else than on this earth of ours, nor could any local transition or physical transformation bring him nearer. God is here, above, beneath, around us; and the only change that is needed to bring us to the beatific vision of his presence is the quickening and clarifying of human souls. Purify and ennoble these, let pure light fill the minds and pure love the hearts of men, and heaven would be here; the common air and skies would become resplendent with a divine glory. The eternal world is not a world beyond time and the grave. It embraces time; it is ready to realize itself under all the forms of temporal things. Its light and power are latent everywhere, waiting for human souls to welcome it, ready to break through the transparent veil of earthly things, and to suffuse with its ineffable radiance the common life of man. And so, the supreme aim of Christian endeavor is not to look away to an inconceivable heaven beyond the skies, and to spend our life in preparing for it, but it is to realize that latent heaven, those possibilities of spir-

itual good, that undeveloped Kingdom of righteousness and love and truth, which human nature and human society contain.

Does anyone press on me the thought that, say what we will of the future, death to each of us is near, and no ulterior hope can quell the nearer anxiety as to what is to become of us, and how we are to prepare for the fast-approaching, inevitable hour? Then I answer, finally, that to whatever world death introduce you, the best conceivable preparation for it is to labor for the highest good of the world in which you live. Be the change which death brings what it may, he who has spent his life in trying to make this world better can never be unprepared for another. If heaven is for the pure and holy, if that which makes men good is that which best qualifies for heaven, what better discipline in goodness can we conceive for a human spirit, what more calculated to elicit and develop its highest affections and energies, than to live and labor for a brother's welfare? To find our deepest joy, not in the delights of sense, nor in the gratification of personal ambition, nor even in the serene pursuits of culture and science — nay, not even in seeking the safety of our own souls, but in striving for the highest good of those who are dear to our Father in heaven, and the moral and spiritual redemption of that world for which the Son of God lived and died — say, can a nobler school of goodness be discovered than this?

Where shall love and sympathy and beneficence find ampler training, or patience, courage, dauntless devotion, nobler opportunities of exercise — than in the war with evil? Where shall faith find richer culture, or hope a more entrancing aim, than in that victory over sin and sorrow and death, which, if Christianity be true, is one day to crown the strife of ages? Live for this, find your dearest work here, let love to God and man be the animating principle of your being; and then, let death come when it may, and carry you where it will, you will not be unprepared for it. The rending of the veil

which hides the secrets of the unseen world, the summons that calls you into regions unknown, need awaken in your breast no perturbation or dismay; for you cannot in God's universe go where love and truth and self-devotion are things of naught, or where a soul, filled with undying faith in the progress and identifying its own happiness with the final triumph of goodness, shall find itself forsaken.*

* From *University Sermons* (Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons, 1898).

Phillips Brooks

1835 — 1893

PHILLIPS BROOKS was born in Boston, Massachusetts, December 13, 1835, and died there January 23, 1893. He had on both sides of his house a most distinguished ancestry. The bench, the bar, the counting-house and the pulpit of New England for two hundred years all combined to create his great body, his noble head, his masterful mind, his glowing spirit and his lips touched with fire. His father, his mother and their forebears inherited the Puritan traditions mediated more immediately through Boston Unitarianism. During Brooks' early boyhood the family, probably at Mrs. Brooks' urging, became communicants at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. He was himself only four years old at the time and had, therefore, no boyhood memories not associated with St. Paul's.

Naturally he was sent to Boston Latin School and as naturally to Harvard. He taught for a little, and not successfully, at the Latin School and after a period of questing uncertainty, about which he was always reticent, matriculated in the Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church at Alexandria, Virginia, graduated therefrom after a little time as preceptor in the preparatory department, and was called to the Church of the Advent in Philadelphia. His outstanding power as a preacher was immediately recognized. The incidence of it was both a revelation and a prophecy. A new star had risen and there was a kind of magical communication of the news. He began at once to be called to other parishes and after two years he accepted (1861) the call to Holy Trinity Church, also in Philadelphia.

His eight years' ministry in Holy Trinity covered the

period of the Civil War, Lincoln's death and the beginnings of reconstruction; years of high emotion, of a nation in travail. Such years mature a preacher quickly; their danger is that they may force him. Brooks' letters and sermons show no sign of a man being carried in message and passion beyond the supporting strength of an honest and soundly developing mind. They do reveal the nature of a force for which no words are adequate, finding such channels as the cause of his country supplied and moving with splendor and amplitude.

His sermon on "The Mercies of Reoccupation," preached in the late autumn of 1863 when "the silent graves on that hill-front at Gettysburg [were] voiceful with the promise that, come what will, our northern soil has felt the last footprint of the oppressor and invader," still remains one of the wisest, noblest and most impassioned of his sermons. His prayer at the Harvard commemoration in 1865, to which the college called all her sons and the wise and great of Massachusetts, to honor Harvard's living soldiers — and her dead — was remembered by those who heard it as though a prophet had come to the old Harvard Square Church and the heavens were opened to let down their light upon his upturned face — that on a day which first heard the recitation of Lowell's "Commemoration Ode"!

Brooks had become a national figure. He was called to Trinity, Boston, in 1869 and after natural hesitations accepted. Thereafter and until his death, Trinity pulpit was his throne and eventually America and England became his parish. His career became a kind of romance. The years flowed on with an always fuller current of success and recognition to which everything contributed. Richardson presently built for him and Trinity a noble Romanesque church whose interior John La Farge decorated. That type of architecture and interior decoration were then new to America; the *Boston Transcript* held that it marked an era in American art and church building. The less conservative thought it

unequaled in America. It began to be imitated widely with less happy results.

Brooks' friends built it both joyously and generously. Thereafter church and preacher were inseparably united. A. V. G. Allen devoted to the years which followed eight hundred pages of the most massive biography ever written of any preacher. Brooks gave himself prodigally — in the pulpits of Great Britain and the United States; in his contacts with all sorts and conditions of people; in letters, addresses, lectures; and always, always in the unbroken issue of his noble sermons. Allen notes phases and periods but they seem a seamless robe. College and university preaching entered a new phase — the " Board of Preachers " was really the result of Brooks' refusal to become the only university preacher at Harvard, and the happy device was widely adopted. For such services he was always in demand. He captured the old churches and cathedrals of England as Moody and Sankey had captured the great halls, won from English critics an acclaiming recognition and preached before the queen.

He delighted in travel and had every opportunity, for his parishes were generous in putting money and time at his disposal. No one could have wanted more than life gave him. In the portraits of his early middle life he is a figure of radiant happiness but his later portraits, beginning at fifty, show deepening lines. Thereafter the documentation of time is arresting; by fifty-five the eyes are sad and the lines are deep. A year later he is an old man. I know nothing like this in any other series of portraits, as though beneath all his fullness of apparently untroubled success the price and passion of the cross had its way with him. His elevation to the bishopric of Massachusetts was only an episode, though one of the few controversial episodes of his life.

He died on a January morning. He was alone during most of the night before save for his housekeeper who sat outside the door. His physician had said he would be better in the

morning. His funeral procession from Trinity to Arlington through Harvard Yard was attended as though he were a king returning from his wars.

He was always the preacher and he took preaching into a new region. His supreme concern was life. He lived and preached through the creative heart of the nineteenth century, sensitive to the changing thought and to the religious world out of which he spoke and back to which he spoke. His church with its ordinances, its liturgies and its Christian year supplied him the frame. His own eager, freedom-loving, courageous, far-ranging mind and spirit supplied the content. He kept religion alive when so much conspired to undo it. He was not strange to controversy but for the most part he lived and preached in regions controversy could not reach. He had not the psychological technique of, say, a Fosdick. But his insight and understanding more than made up for that lack. He applied rather than illustrated. He brought his motifs back to life with endless resource. The incarnation was the focus of his theology. His preaching was Christocentric, but always for more and fuller life.

He was a textual-topical preacher. His topics are always supported by a text, his texts supply the phrase for a telling topic. He was a master in his uses of analogy, he was a poet, he had a superb but restrained eloquence, his delivery was torrential but consummate; and always the sermon and the preacher were one. The topics of many of his sermons are in all books on preaching. He created a type of preaching which has only in our own time begun to be lost. He was always an artist and his sermons are works of art in themselves. A score of sermons ask to be included here. I have chosen one not in most anthologies because I think it nobly representative of Brooks the preacher.

THE PILLAR IN GOD'S TEMPLE

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, . . . and my new name.

REV. 3:12

IT IS VERY MANY YEARS since these great words were sent abroad into a world of struggle. We can hardly read them without remembering on what countless souls they have fallen in a shower of strength. Men and women everywhere, wrestling with life, have heard the promise to "him that overcometh"; and, though much of the imagery in which the promise was conveyed was blind to them, though they very vaguely identified their conflict with the battle which these far-off people in the Book of the Revelation were engaged in fighting, still, the very sound of the words has brought them inspiration. Let us study the promise a little more carefully this morning. Perhaps it will always be worth more to us if we do. A text which we have once studied is like a star upon which we have once looked through the telescope. We always see it afterwards, full of the brightness and color which that look showed us. Even if it grows dim behind a cloud, or other nearer stars seem to outshine it, we never think it dull or small after we have once looked deep into its depths.

"To him that overcometh," reads the promise; and the first thing that we want to understand is what the struggle is in which the victory is to be won. It is the Savior Christ who speaks. His voice comes out of the mystery and glory of heaven to the church in Philadelphia, and this book, in which his words are written, stands last in the New Testament. The gospel story is all told. The work of incarnation

and redemption is all done. Jesus has gone back to his Father, and now is speaking down to men and women on the earth, who are engaged there in the special struggle for which he has prepared the conditions, and to which it has been the purpose of his life and death to summon them. Let us remember that. It is a special struggle. It is not the mere human fight with pain and difficulty which every living mortal meets. It is not the wrestling for place, for knowledge, for esteem, for any of the prizes which men covet. Nay, it is not absolutely the struggle after righteousness; it is not the pure desire and determination to escape from sin, considered simply as the aspiration of a man's own nature and the determination of a man's own will. It is not to these that Christ looks down and sends his promise. He had called out a special struggle on the earth. He had bidden men struggle after goodness, out of love and gratitude and loyalty to him.

If the motive, everywhere and always, is the greatest and most important part of every action, then there must always be a difference between men who are striving to do right and not to do wrong, according to the love which sets them striving. If it is love of themselves, their struggle will be one thing. If it is love of the abstract righteousness, it will be another. If it is love of Christ, it will be still another. Jesus is talking to the men and women there among the Asian mountains, and to the hosts of men and women who were to come after them upon the earth, who should be fighters against sin, against their own sin, who should struggle to be pure and brave and true and spiritual and unselfish, because they loved Christ, because he had lived and died for them, because they belonged to him, because he would be honored and pleased by their goodness, grieved and dishonored by their wickedness; because by goodness they would come into completer sympathy with him, and gain a fuller measure of his love. It is to men and women in this struggle that Christ speaks, and promises them the appropriate reward

which belongs to perseverance and success in just that obedience of loyalty and love.

For one of the discoveries that we make, as soon as we grow thoughtful about life at all, is that the world is not merely full of struggle, but full of many kinds of struggle, which vary very much in value. We begin by very broad and superficial classifications. Men are happy or unhappy; men are wise or foolish; men are generous or stingy. But by and by such broad divisions will not satisfy us. The great regions into which we have classified our fellow men begin to break up and divide. There are all kinds of happiness, all kinds of wisdom, all kinds of generosity. It means little to us, when we have once found this out, to be told that a man is happy, wise, or generous, until we have learned also the special quality of this quality as it appears in him, how he came to possess it, and how he works it out in life. And so in all the world of struggling men, as we observe them we find by and by that there are differences. A great, broad mass of eager, dissatisfied, expectant faces it appears at first; a wild and restless tossing hither and thither, as if a great ship had broken asunder in mid-ocean, and her frightened people, with one common fear and dread of being drowned, were struggling indiscriminately in the waves.

But at last all that changes, and we wonder how it ever could have looked so to us. Struggle comes to seem as various as life. The objects for which men struggle, and the strength by which men struggle, grow endlessly various. And then, among the mass that seemed one general and monotonous turmoil, there stand out these — there shine out these — whose struggle is against sin, for holiness, and by the love of Christ. Other men struggle against poverty, against neglect; for ease, for power, for fame; and by the love of self, the noble abstract love of righteousness; but, scattered through the whole mass thickly enough to give it character and add a new, controlling strain to the eternal music of aspiring

discontent which rises from the swarm of human living, there are these strugglers against sin, by the love of Christ. They are by your side. They are in your houses. They meet you in the street. Your children are catching sight of that struggle, and its fascination and its power, in the times when they are silent and thoughtful, and seem to be passing out of your familiar understanding. Your friend, whose carelessness concerning the things about which you are eager seems so strange to you, is careless about them only because he is fighting a deeper fight. He is fighting against sin, by the love of Christ. Therefore, he does not dread the poverty and the unpopularity against which your selfishness makes you so eager to fear and fight.

I

This, then, is the peculiar struggle to the victory in which Christ, out of heaven, gives his promise. And now the promise can be understood if we understand the struggle. The two belong together. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out." The ideas of the pillar in the building, in a temple, are these two: incorporation and permanence. The pillar is part of the structure; and when it is once set in its place it is to be there as long as the temple stands. How clear the picture stands before us. There is a great, bright, solemn temple, where men come to worship. Its doors are ever open; its windows tempt the sky. There are many and many things which have to do with such a temple. The winds come wandering through its high arches. Perhaps the birds stray in and build their nests, and stray away again when the short summer is done. The children roam across its threshold, and play for a few moments on its shining floor. Banners and draperies are hung upon its walls awhile, and then carried away. Poor men and women, with their burdens and distress, come in and say a moment's prayer, and hurry

out. Stately processions pass from door to door, making a brief disturbance in its quiet air.

Generation after generation comes and goes and is forgotten, each giving its place up to another; while still the temple stands, receiving and dismissing them in turn, and outliving them all. All these are transitory. All these come into the temple and then go out again. But a day comes when the great temple needs enlargement. The plan which it embodies must be made more perfect. It is to grow to a completer self. And then they bring up to the doors a column of cut stone, hewn in the quarry for this very place, fitted and fit for this place and no other; and, bringing it in with toil, they set it solidly down as part of the growing structure, part of the expanding plan. It blends with all the other stones. It loses while it keeps its individuality. It is useless, except there where it is; and yet there, where it is, it has a use which is peculiarly its own, and different from every other stone's. The walls are built around it. It shares the building's changes. The reverence that men do to the sacred place falls upon it. The lights of sacred festivals shine on its face. It glows in the morning sunlight, and grows dim and solemn as the dusk gathers through the great expanse. Generations pass before it in their worship. They come and go, and the new generations follow them, and still the pillar stands. The day when it was hewn and set there is forgotten; as children never think when an old patriarch, whom they see standing among them, was born. It is part of the temple where the men so long dead set it so long ago. From the day that they set it there, it " goes no more out."

Can we not see perfectly the meaning of the figure? There are men and women everywhere who have something to do with God. They cannot help touching and being touched by him, and his vast purposes, and the treatment which he is giving to the world. They cross and recross the pavement of his providence. They come to him for what they want,

and he gives it to them, and they carry it away. They ask him for bread, and then carry it off into the chambers of their own selfishness and eat it. They ask him for power, and then go off to the battlefields or workshops of their own selfishness and use it. They are forever going in and out of the presence of God. They sweep through his temple like the wandering wind; or they come in like the chance worshiper, and bend a moment's knee before the altar. And then there are the other men who are struggling to escape from sin, by the love of Christ. How different they are. The end of everything for them is to get to Christ, and put themselves in him, and stay there.

They do not so much want to get to Christ that they may get away from sin, as they want to get away from sin that they may get to Christ. God is to them not merely a great helper of their plans; he is the sum of all their plans, the end of all their wishes, the Being to whom their souls say, not " Lord, help me do what I will "; but, " Lord, show me Thy will that I may make it mine, and serve myself in serving Thee." When such a soul as that comes to Christ, it is like the day when the marble column from the quarry was dragged up and set into the temple aisle. Such a soul becomes part of the great purpose of God. It can go no more out. It has no purpose or meaning outside of God. Its life is hid there in the sacred aisles of God's life. If God's life grows dark, the dusk gathers around this pillar which is set in it. If God's life brightens, the pillar burns and glows. Men who behold this soul, think instantly of God. They cannot picture the soul outside of the fear, the love, the communion, the obedience of God.

II

The New Testament abounds with this idea and the discrimination which we have been trying to make. When the Prodigal Son comes back to his father, he cries out, " I am

not worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants"; but the father answers, "This my son was dead, and is alive again"; and the pillar is set up in the temple. When Jesus looks into his disciples' faces at the last supper, he says: "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things which I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." The servant is the drapery hung upon the nails; the friend is the pillar built into the wall. Paul writes to the Romans: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God." It is the calm assurance of the pillar which feels the pressure of the wall around it, and defies any temptation to entice it, or any force to tear it away.

Nor is there anything unphilosophical, or unintelligible, or merely mystical in all this. The same thing essentially occurs everywhere. Two men both come to know another man, richer and larger than either of them. Something called friendship grows up between each of them and him. But the first of the two men who seek this greater man, comes and goes into and out of his great neighbor's life. He keeps the purposes of his own life distinct. He comes to his rich friend for knowledge, for strength, for inspiration, and then he carries them off and uses them for his own ends. The other friend gives up all ends in life which he has valued, and makes this new man's, this greater man's purposes, his. He wants what this great man wants, because this great man wants it. Naturally and easily we say that he "lives in" this other man. By and by you cannot conceive of him as separate from this greater life. The reward of his loving devotion is

that he is made a pillar in the temple of his friend, and goes no more out.

Two men both love their country. One loves her because of the advantage that he gets from her, the help that she gives to his peculiar interests. The other loves her for herself, for her embodiment of the ideas which he believes are truest and divinest and most human. One uses the country. The other asks the country to use him. One goes into the country's service and gathers up money or knowledge or strength, and then, as it were, goes out and carries them with him to help the tasks which he has to do in his own private life. The other takes all his private interests, and sacrifices them to the country's good. And what is the reward of this supreme devotion, which there will always be some little group of supremely patriotic men ready to make in every healthy state? Will they not belong to the state, and will it not belong continually to them? They will never be lost out of its history. They will become its pillars and share its glory, as they helped to support its life.

The same is true about the church. There are the multitudes who go in and out, who count the church as theirs, who gather from her thought, knowledge, the comfort of good company, the sense of safety; and then there are others who think they truly, as the light phrase so deeply means, " belong to the church." They are given to it, and no compulsion could separate them from it. They are part of its structure. They are its pillars. Here and hereafter they can never go out of it. Life would mean nothing to them outside the church of Christ.

And, to give just one more example, so it is with truth. The men who seek truth for what she has to give them, who want to be scholars for the emoluments, the honors, the associations, which scholarship will bring, these are the men who will turn away from truth so soon as she has given them her gifts, and leave herself dishonored — who will turn away

from any truth which has no gifts to give. But, always, there are a few seekers who want truth's self, and not her gifts. Once scholars, they are scholars always. They really put their lives into the structure of the world's advancing knowledge. There those lives always remain, like solid stones for the scholarship of the years to come to build upon. There is no world conceivable to which their souls can go, where they will not turn to seek what it is possible there for souls like theirs to know.

Thus everywhere, in every interest of human life, there is a deeper entrance and a more permanent abiding which is reserved for those who have come into the profoundest sympathy with its principles, and the most thorough unselfish consecration to its work. Come back, then, from these illustrations, to the Christian life, and see there the larger exhibition of the same law which they illustrate. God is the governor of all the world. The purpose of his government, the one design on which it all proceeds, is that the whole world, through obedience to him, should be wrought into his likeness, and made the utterance of his character. Let that thought dwell before your mind, and feel, as you must feel, what a sublime and glorious picture it involves. Then remember that God does not treat the world in one great, vague generality. He sees the world all made up of free souls, of men and women. The world can become like him by obedience, only as the souls of men and women become like him by obedience. Each soul, your soul and mine, must enter into that consummation, must realize the idea of that picture by itself, by its own free submission; helped, no doubt, by the movement of souls all about it, and by the great promise of the world's salvation, but yet acting for itself, by its own personal resolve.

III

To each soul, then, to yours and mine, God brings all the material of this terrestrial struggle — all the temptations, all the disappointments, all the successes, all the doubts and perplexities, all the jarring of interests, all the chances of hindrance and chances of help which come flocking about every newborn life. The struggle begins, begins with every living creature, is beginning today with these boys and girls about you, just as you can remember that years and years ago it began with you. What is it to succeed in that struggle? What success shall you set before them to excite their hope and energy? On what success shall you congratulate yourself? Is it success in the struggle of life simply to get through with decency and die without disgrace or shame? Is it success in the struggle of life just to have so laid hold on God's mercy, to have so made our peace with him, that we know we shall not be punished for our sins? Is it success in the struggle of life even to have so lived in his presence that every day has been bright with the sense that he was taking care of us?

These things are very good; but if the purpose of God's government of the world and of us is what I said, then the real victory in the struggle can be nothing less than the accomplishment in us of that which it is the object of all his government to accomplish in the world. When, truly obedient, we have been made like him whom we obey, then, only then, we have overcome in the struggle of life. And then we must be pillars in his temple. With wills harmonized with his will; with souls that love and hate in truest unison of sympathy with his; with no purposes left in us but his purposes — then we have come to what he wants the world to come to. We have taken our places in the slowly rising temple of his will. To whatever worlds he carries our souls when they shall pass out of these imprisoning bodies,

in those worlds these souls of ours shall find themselves part of the same great temple; for it belongs not to this earth alone. There can be no end of the universe where God is, to which that growing temple does not reach, the temple of a creation to be wrought at last into a perfect utterance of God by a perfect obedience to God.

O my dear friends, that is the victory that is awaiting you. Slowly, through all the universe, that temple of God is being built. Wherever, in any world, a soul, by free-willed obedience, catches the fire of God's likeness, it is set into the growing walls, a living stone. When, in your hard fight, in your tiresome drudgery, or in your terrible temptation, you catch the purpose of your being, and give yourself to God, and so give him the chance to give himself to you, your life, a living stone, is taken up and set into that growing wall. And the other living, burning stones claim and welcome and embrace it. They bind it in with themselves. They make it sure with their assurance, and they gather sureness out of it. The great wall of divine likeness through human obedience grows and grows, as one tried and purified and ripened life after another is laid into it; and down at the base, the cornerstone of all, there lies the life of him who, though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered, and, being made perfect, became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.

In what strange quarries and stone-yards the stones for that celestial wall are being hewn! Out of the hillsides of humiliated pride; deep in the darkness of crushed despair; in the fretting and dusty atmosphere of little cares; in the hard, cruel contacts that man has with man; wherever souls are being tried and ripened, in whatever commonplace and homely ways — there God is hewing out the pillars for his temple. Oh, if the stone can only have some vision of the temple of which it is to lie a part forever, what patience must fill it as it feels the blows of the hammer, and knows that

success for it is simply to let itself be wrought into what shape the Master wills.

Upon the pillar thus wrought into the temple of God's loving Kingdom there are three inscriptions. I can only in one word ask you to remember what they are: "I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, and my new name." The soul that in obedience to God is growing into his likeness, is dedicated to the divine love, to the hope of the perfect society, and to the ever new knowledge of redemption and the great Redeemer. Those are its hopes; and, reaching out forever and ever, all through eternity, those hopes it never can exhaust. Those writings on the pillar shall burn with purer and brighter fire the longer that the pillar stands in the temple of him whom Jesus calls "my God."

May all this great promise ennoble and illumine the struggle of our life; keep us from ever thinking that it is mean and little; lift us above its details while it keeps us forever faithful to them; and give us victory at last through him who has already overcome.*

* From *The Candle of the Lord and Other Sermons* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1899).

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

1834 — 1892

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON was born in Kelvedon, Essex, England, June 19, 1834. He died at Mentone, France, January 31, 1892. There was little in his heredity to account for him. His father was a lay preacher in an Independent Chapel. His early boyhood was spent under his grandfather's care and he was there mothered by an aunt in an intensely pious atmosphere. His grandmother sought to inform his infant mind on Dr. Watts' hymns with the added encouragement of a penny for each hymn committed to memory. Trade was so brisk that she reduced his wages to a halfpenny. His more practical grandfather offered him a shilling a dozen to rid his place of rats. Charles chose the hymns. They would, he thought, be more useful to a boy if he should become a preacher.

After an unusually bitter struggle against the gospel call he was converted in his fifteenth year in a Primitive Methodist Chapel under a humble preacher who asked of him no more than to look to Jesus. "He looked and was saved." He began immediately to teach in Sunday school and before long — all inevitably — was preaching. Spurgeon — to use a telling and inelegant current phrase — was a "natural." His whole habit and pattern were in action from the first. What university and theological college might have done — or undone — for him is sheer conjecture. They never had the chance. He was called from Essex to London with no intervening stages. After that there were no stages save the marvelous demonstration of his pulpit power, unfailing, undiminished, for forty years. His congregations outgrew the Park

Street Chapel immediately. They filled any building he preached in — Exeter Hall, Surrey Music Hall, the Crystal Palace. Then they built the Metropolitan Tabernacle for him. (It is said a million people contributed.) Thereafter by any test his career was astounding. The Tabernacle became a vast enterprise, his fame was world-wide.

Naturally he has been studied from every point of view, analyzed by every test of the critical homiletic laboratory. The only answer is: Spurgeon. His face and person were heavy, his voice was superb. He understood all sorts and conditions of plain people. He had centrally but one message: Men are lost except Jesus save. He had no more doubt of heaven and hell than he had of Trafalgar Square. He did not "pare down depravity." He would not make his gospel small. "I believe in a pit that is bottomless and a heaven that is topless." He had no use for preaching which so diminished the gospel that "there is not enough of it left to make soup for a sick grasshopper." He was Evangelist out of *Pilgrim's Progress.* His language also was out of *Pilgrim's Progress* — and out of the King James Version, forthright Saxon. He had in addition an unmatched faculty for speech salty and pungent, for illustrations which his hearers could understand, for getting at the heart of the matter. And he knew the secret of laughter and tears. He was suited to his time and place and to the ways and minds of those to whom he spoke. He was easy to caricature and against the backgrounds of Anglican culture and order his ways seemed crude and he was criticized and ridiculed. But common folk heard him gladly and he moved among staggering statistics of attendance upon his Tabernacle. Moody probably preached to more individuals, but multiply five or six thousand by all the Sundays in a year and that by nearly forty years and the total is unparalleled. And there were, besides, his published sermons, series after series.

It is not easy to choose a representative sermon even among

so many. One of the best known is " Return, Return, O Shulamite: Return, Return." Dwight L. Moody had a Bible of Spurgeon's in which, certainly for many years, he had marked and dated his texts. The pages of the Song of Solomon were covered with marks. " I never," said Moody, " could preach from the Song of Solomon." Spurgeon could and did, and the sermon on the Shulamite shows what he could make of a seemingly impossible text. I have chosen instead of this " Everybody's Sermon." It shows his nearness to life, his genius for application, illustration and analogy, and his facile power of elaboration. This he shares with all great preachers. One of their gifts — always — is opulence of resource as though they preached from reservoirs which could never be exhausted. When they have said and said, there is always more to say, and they rejoice visibly in their apparently inexhaustible creative power. Spurgeon's sermons are never so long as Chalmers' or Channing's but they reveal the same limitless fecundity, though not in the regions of theological speculation. His field was life as chimney-potted London lived it.

EVERYBODY'S SERMON

I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes.

HOS. 12:10

WHEN THE Lord would win his people Israel from their iniquities, he did not leave a stone unturned, but gave them precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little. He taught them sometimes with a rod in his hand, when he smote them with sore famine and pestilence, and invasion; at other times he sought to win them with bounties, for he multiplied their corn and their wine and their oil, and he laid no famine upon them. But all the

teachings of his providence were unavailing, and whilst his hand was stretched out, still they continued to rebel against the Most High. He hewed them by the prophets. He sent them first one, and then another; the golden-mouthed Isaiah was followed by the plaintive Jeremy; while at his heels, in quick succession, there followed many far-seeing, thunder-speaking seers. But though prophet followed prophet in quick succession, each of them uttering the burning words of the Most High, yet they would have none of his rebukes, but they hardened their hearts, and went on still in their iniquities. Among the rest of God's agencies for striking their attention and their conscience, was the use of similitudes. The prophets were accustomed not only to preach, but to be themselves as signs and wonders to the people.

For instance, Isaiah named his child, Maher-shalal-hash-baz, that they might know that the judgment of the Lord was hastening upon them; and this child was ordained to be a sign, " for before the child shall have knowledge to cry, my father and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria." On another occasion, the Lord said unto Isaiah, " Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off the shoe from thy foot." And he did so, walking naked and barefoot. And the Lord said, " Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia; so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives young and old, naked and barefoot, to the shame of Egypt." Hosea, the prophet, himself had to teach the people by a similitude. You will notice in the first chapter a most extraordinary similitude. The Lord said to him, " Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms; for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord "; and he did so, and the children begotten by this marriage were made as signs and wonders to the people. As for his first son, he was to be called

" Jezreel upon the house of Jehu." As for his daughter, she was to be called Lo-ruhamah, " for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away." Thus by divers significant signs, God made the people think. He made his prophets do strange things, in order that the people might talk about what he had done, and then the meaning which God would have them learn, should come home more powerfully to their consciences, and be the better remembered.

God is every day preaching to us by similitudes. When Christ was on earth he preached in parables, and, though he is in heaven now, he is preaching in parables today. Providence is God's sermon. The things which we see about us are God's thoughts and God's words to us; and if we were but wise there is not a step that we take, which we should not find to be full of mighty instruction. O ye sons of men! God warns you every day by his own word; he speaks to you by the lips of his servants, his ministers; but, besides this, by similitudes he addresses you at every time. He leaves no stone unturned to bring his wandering children to himself, to make the lost sheep of the house of Israel return to the fold. In addressing myself to you this morning, I shall endeavor to show how every day, and every season of the year, in every place, and in every calling which you are made to exercise, God is speaking to you by similitudes.

I

Every day God speaks to you by similitudes. Let us begin with the *early morning*. This morning you awakened and you found yourselves unclothed, and you began to array yourselves in your garments. Did not God, if you would but have heard him, speak to you by a similitude? Did he not as much as say to thee, " Sinner, what will it be when thy vain dreams shall have ended, if thou shouldst wake up in eternity to find thyself naked? Wherewithal shalt thou array

thyself? If in this life thou dost cast away the wedding garment, the spotless righteousness of Jesus Christ, what wilt thou do when the trump of the archangel shall awaken thee from thy clay-cold couch in the grave, when the heavens shall be blazing with lightnings, and the solid pillars of the earth shall quake with the terrors of God's thunder? How wilt thou be able to dress thyself then?" Canst thou confront thy Maker without a covering for thy nakedness? Adam dared not, and canst thou attempt it? Will he not affright thee with his terrors? Will he not cast thee to the tormentors that thou mayest be burned with unquenchable fire, because thou didst forget the clothing of thy soul while thou wast in this place of probation?

Well, you have put on your dress, and you come down to your families, and your children gather round your table for the morning meal. If you have been wise, *God has been preaching to you by a similitude then:* he seemed to say to thee — "Sinner, to whom should a child go but to his Father? And where should be his resort when he is hungry but to his Father's table?" And as you fed your children, if you had an ear to hear, the Lord was speaking to you and saying, "How willingly would I feed you! How would I give you of the bread of heaven and cause you to eat angels' food! But thou hast spent thy money for that which is not bread, and thy labor for that which satisfieth not. Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, let thy soul delight itself in fatness." Did he not stand there as a Father, and say, "Come my child, come to my table. The precious blood of my Son has been shed to be thy drink, and he has given his body to be thy bread. Why wilt thou wander hungry and thirsty? Come to my table, O my child, for I love my children to be there and to feast upon the mercies I have provided."

You left your home and you went to your business. I know not in what calling your time was occupied — of that

we will say more before we shall have gathered up the ends of your similitudes this morning — but you spend your time in your work; and surely, beloved, all the time that your fingers were occupied, God was speaking to your heart, if the ears of your soul had not been closed, so that you were heavy and ready to slumber, and could not hear his voice. And when the sun was shining in high heaven, and the hour of noon was reached, mightest thou not have lifted up thine eye and remembered that if thou hadst committed thy soul to God, thy path should have been as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day? Did he not speak to thee and say, "I brought the sun from the darkness of the east; I have guided him and helped him to ascend the slippery steeps of heaven, and now he standeth in his zenith, like a giant that hath run his race, and hath attained his goal. And even so will I do with thee. Commit thy ways unto me and I will make thee full of light, and thy path shall be as brightness, and thy life shall be as the noonday; thy sun shall not go down by day, but the days of thy mourning shall be ended, for the Lord God shall be thy light and thy salvation."

And the sun began to set, and the shadows of evening were drawing on, and did not the Lord then remind thee of thy death? Suns have their setting, and men have their graves. When the shadows of the evening were stretched out, and when the darkness began to gather, did he not say unto thee, "O, man, take heed of thine eventide, for the light of the sun shall not endure forever. There are twelve hours wherein a man shall work, but when they are past there is no work nor device in the night of that grave whither ye are all hastening. Work while ye have the light, for the night cometh wherein no man can work. Therefore, whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." Look, I say, to the sun at his setting, and observe the rainbow hues of glory with which he paints the sky, and mark how he appears to increase his orb, as he nears the horizon. O man, kneel

down and learn this prayer — " Lord, let my dying be like the setting of the sun; help me, if clouds and darkness are round about me, to light them up with splendor; surround me, O my God, with a greater brightness at my death than I have shown in all my former life. If my deathbed shall be the miserable pallet, and if I expire in some lone cot, yet nevertheless, grant, O Lord, that my poverty may be gilded with grandeur of a Christian's departure at my dying hour." God speaketh to thee, O man, by similitude, from the rising to the setting of the sun.

And now, thou hast lit thy candles and thou sittest down; thy children are about thee, and the Lord sends thee a little preacher to preach thee a sermon, if thou wilt hear. It is a little gnat, and it flieth round and round about thy candle, and delighteth itself in the light thereof, till, dazzled and intoxicated, it begins to singe its wings and burn itself. Thou seekest to put it away, but it dashes into the flame, and having burned itself it can scarcely fan itself through the air again. But as soon as it has recruited its strength again, madlike it dashes to its death and destruction. Did not the Lord say to thee, " Sinner, thou art doing this also; thou lovest the light of sin; oh, that thou wert wise enough to tremble at the fire of sin, for he who delights in the sparks thereof must be consumed in the burning "? Did not thy hand seem to be like the hand of the Almighty, who would put thee away from thine own destruction, and who rebukes and smites thee by his providence, as much as to say to thee, " Poor silly man, be not thine own destruction "? And while thou seest perhaps with a little sorrow the death of the foolish insect, might not that forewarn thee of thine awful doom, when, after having been dazzled with the giddy round of this world's joys, thou shalt at last plunge into the eternal burning and lose thy soul, so madly, for nothing but the enjoyments of an hour? Doth not God preach to thee thus?

And now it is time for thee to retire to thy rest. Thy door

is bolted, and thou hast fast closed it. Did not that remind thee of that saying, " When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know not whence you are "? In vain shall be your knocking then, when the bars of immutable justice shall have fast closed the gates of mercy on mankind; when the hand of the Almighty Master shall have shut his children within the gates of Paradise, and shall have left the thief and the robber in the cold chilly darkness, the outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Did he not preach to thee by similitude? Even then, when thy finger was on the bolt, might not his finger have been on thy heart?

And at night time thou wast startled. The watchman in the street awoke thee with the cry of the hour of the night, or his tramp along the street. O man, if thou hadst ears to hear, thou mightest have heard in the steady tramp of the policeman the cry, " Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." And every sound at midnight that did awaken thee from thy slumber and startle thee upon thy bed, might seem to forewarn thee of that dread trump of the archangel which shall herald the coming of the Son of man, in the day he shall judge both the quick and the dead, according to my gospel. Oh that ye were wise, that ye understood this, for all the day long from dewy morning till the darkness of the eventide, and the thick darkness of midnight, God evermore doth preach to man — he preacheth to him by similitudes.

II

And now we turn the current of our thoughts, and observe that *all the year* round God doth preach to man by similitudes. It was but a little while ago that we were sowing our seeds in our garden, and scattering the corn over the broad furrows. God had sent the seedtime, to remind us that we

too are like the ground, and that he is scattering seed in our hearts each day. And did he not say to us, "Take heed, O man, lest thou shouldst be like the highway whereon the seed was scattered, but the fowls of the air devoured it. Take heed that thou be not like the ground that had its basement on a hard and arid rock, lest this seed should spring up and by and by should wither away when the sun arose, because it had not much depth of earth. And be thou careful, O son of man, that thou art not like the ground where the seed did spring up, but the thorns sprang up and choked it; but be thou like the good ground whereon the seed did fall, and it brought forth fruit, some twenty, some fifty, and some a hundred fold."

We thought, when we were sowing the seed, that we expected one day to see it spring up again. Was there not a lesson for us there? Are not our actions all of them as seeds? Are not our little words like grains of mustard seed? Is not our daily conversation like a handful of the corn that we scatter over the soil? And ought we not to remember that our words shall live again, that our acts are as immortal as ourselves, that after having lain a little while in the dust to be matured, they shall certainly arise? The black deeds of sin shall bear a dismal harvest of damnation; and the right deeds which God's grace has permitted us to do, shall, through his mercy and not through our merit, bring forth a bounteous harvest in the day when they who sow in tears shall reap in joy. Doth not seedtime preach to thee, O man, and say, "Take heed that thou sowest good seed in thy field"?

And when the seed sprang up, and the season had changed, did God cease then to preach? Ah! no. First the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear, had each its homily. And when at last the harvest came, how loud the sermon which it preached to us! It said to us, "O Israel, I have set a harvest for thee. Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, and he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit

reap life everlasting." If you have to journey in the country, you will, if your heart is rightly attuned, find a marvelous mass of wisdom couched in a cornfield. Why, I could not attempt for a moment to open the mighty mines of golden treasure which are hidden there. Think, beloved, of the joy of the harvest. How does it tell us of the joy of the redeemed, if we, being saved, shall at last be carried like shocks of corn fully ripe into the garner. Look at the ear of corn when it is fully ripe, and see how it dippeth toward the earth! It held its head erect before, but in getting ripe how humble does it become! And how does God speak to the sinner, and tell him, that if he would be fit for the great harvest he must drop his head and cry, " Lord have mercy upon me a sinner." And when we see the weeds spring up among wheat, have we not our Master's parable over again of the tares among the wheat; and are we not reminded of the great day of division, when he shall say to the reaper, " Gather first the tares and bind them in bundles, to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn "? O yellow field of corn, thou preachest well to me, for thou sayest to me, the minister, " Behold, the fields are ripe already to the harvest. Work thou thyself, and pray thou the Lord of the harvest to send forth more laborers into the harvest." And it preaches well to thee, thou man of years, it tells thee that the sickle of death is sharp, and that thou must soon fall, but it cheers and comforts thee, for it tells thee that the wheat shall be safely housed, and it bids thee hope that thou shalt be carried to thy Master's garner to be his joy and his delight forever. Hark, then, to the rustling eloquence of the yellow harvest.

In a very little time, my beloved, you will see the birds congregated on the housetops in great multitudes, and after they have whirled round and round and round, as if they were taking their last sight at old England, or rehearsing their supplications before they launched away, you will see them, with their leader in advance, speed across the purple sea to live in

sunnier climes, while winter's cold hand shall strip their native woods. And doth not God seem to preach to you sinners, when these birds are taking their flight? Do you not remember how he himself puts it? "Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord." Doth he not tell us that there is a time of dark winter coming upon this world; a time of trouble, such as there has been none like it, neither shall be any more; a time, when all the joys of sin shall be nipped and frost-bitten, and when the summer of man's estate shall be turned into the dark winter of his disappointment? And does he not say to you, "Sinner! fly away — away — away to the goodly land, where Jesus dwells! Away from self and sin! Away from the city of destruction! Away from the whirl of pleasures, and from the tossing to and fro of trouble! Haste thee, like a bird to its nest! Fly thou across the sea of repentance and faith, and build thy nest in the land of mercy, that when the great day of vengeance shall pass o'er this world, thou mayest be safe in the clefts of the rock."

III

I remember well, how once God preached to me by a similitude in the depth of winter. The earth had been black, and there was scarcely a green thing or a flower to be seen. As you looked across the field, there was nothing but blackness — bare hedges and leafless trees, and black, black earth, wherever you looked. On a sudden God spake, and unlocked the treasures of the snow, and white flakes descended until there was no blackness to be seen, and all was one sheet of dazzling whiteness. It was at that time that I was seeking the Savior, and it was then I found him; and I remember well that sermon which I saw before me: "Come now, and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as snow, though they be red like crimson they shall be whiter than

wool." Sinner! thy heart is like that black ground; thy soul is like that black tree and hedgerow, without leaf or blossom; God's grace is like the white snow — it shall fall upon thee till thy doubting heart shall glitter in whiteness of pardon, and thy poor black soul shall be covered with the spotless purity of the Son of God. He seems to say to you, " Sinner, you are black, but I am ready to forgive you; I will wrap thy heart in the ermine of my Son's righteousness, and with my Son's own garments on, thou shalt be holy as the Holy One."

And the *wind* of today, as it comes howling through the trees — many of which have been swept down — reminds us of the Spirit of the Lord, which " bloweth where it listeth," and when it pleaseth; and it tells us to seek earnestly after that divine and mysterious influence which alone can speed us to our voyage to heaven, which shall cast down the trees of our pride, and tear up by the roots the goodly cedars of our self-confidence; which shall shake our refuges of lies about our ears, and make us look to him who is the only covert from the storm, the only shelter when " the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall."

Aye, and when the *heat* is coming down, and we hide ourselves beneath the shadow of the tree, an angel standeth there, and whispereth, " Look upwards, sinner, as thou hidest thyself from the burning rays of Sol beneath the tree; so there is One who is like the apple tree among the trees of the wood, and he bids thee come and take shadow beneath his branches, for he will screen thee from the eternal vengeance of God, and give thee shelter when the fierce heat of God's anger shall beat upon the heads of wicked men."

And now again, *every place* to which you journey, every animal that you see, every spot you visit, has a sermon for you. Go into your farmyard, and your ox and your ass shall preach to you. " The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." The very dog at your heels may rebuke you. He follows his

master; a stranger will he not follow, for he knows not the voice of a stranger, but ye forsake your God and turn aside unto your crooked ways. Look at the chicken by the side of yonder pond, and let it rebuke your ingratitude. It drinks, and every sip it takes it lifts its head to heaven and thanks the Giver of the rain for the drink afforded to it; while thou eatest and drinkest, and there is no blessing pronounced at thy meals, and no thanksgiving bestowed upon thy Father for his bounty. The very horse is checked by the bridle, and the whip is for the ass; but thy God hath bridled thee by his commandments, and he hath chastened by his providence, yet art thou more obstinate than the ass or the mule; still thou wilt not run in his commandments, but thou turnest aside, willfully and wickedly following out the perversity of thine own heart. Is it not so? Are not these things true of you? If you are still without God and without Christ, must not these things strike your conscience? Would not any one of them lead you to tremble before the Most High, and beg of him that he would give you a new heart and a right spirit, and that no longer you might be as the beast of the field, but might be a man full of the divine Spirit, living in obedience to your Creator?

And in journeying, you have noticed how often the road is rough with stones, and you have murmured because of the way which you have to tread; and have you not thought that those stones were helping to make the road better, and that the worst piece of road when mended with hard stones would in time become smooth and fit to travel on? And did you think how often God has mended you; how many stones of affliction he has cast upon you; how many wagonloads of warnings you have had spread out upon you, and you have been none the better, but have only grown worse; and when he comes to look on you to see whether your life has become smooth, whether the highway of your moral conduct has become more like the king's highway of righteousness, how

might he say, " Alas! I have repaired this road, but it is none the better; let it alone until it becomes a very bog and quagmire, until he who keeps it thus ill shall have perished in it himself."

And thou hast gone by the seaside, and has not the sea talked to thee? Inconstant as the sea art thou, but thou art not one half so obedient. God keeps the sea, the mountain-waved sea, in check with a belt of sand; he spreads the sand along the seashore, and even the sea observes the landmark. " Fear ye not me? saith the Lord; will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it? " It is so. Let thy conscience prick thee. The sea obeys him from shore to shore, and yet thou wilt not have him to be thy God, but thou sayest, " Who is the Lord that I should fear him? Who is Jehovah that I should acknowledge his sway? "

Hear the *mountains* and the *hills,* for they have a lesson. Such is God. He abideth forever — think not that he shall change.

And now, sinner, I entreat thee to open thine eyes as thou goest home today, and if nothing that I have said shall smite thee, perhaps God shall put into thy way something that shall give thee a text, from which thou mayest preach to thyself a sermon that never shall be forgotten. Oh! if I had but time, and thought, and words, I would bring the things that are in heaven above, and in the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth, and I would set them all before thee, and they should every one give their warning before they had passed from thine inspection, and I know that their voice would be, " Consider the Lord thy Creator, and fear and serve him, for he hath made thee, and thou hast not made thyself "; we obey him, and we find it is our beauty to be obedient, and our glory ever to move according to his will; and thou shalt find it

to be the same. Obey him while thou mayest, lest haply when this life is over all these things shall rise up against thee, and the stone in the street shall clamor for thy condemnation, and the beam out of the wall shall bear witness against thee, and the beasts of the field shall be thine accusers, and the valley and hill shall begin to curse thee. O man, the earth is made for thy warning. God would have thee to be saved. He hath set hand posts everywhere in nature and in providence, pointing thee the way to the city of refuge, and if thou art but wise thou needest not miss thy way; it is but thy willful ignorance and thy neglect that shall cause thee to run on in the way of error, for God hath made the way straight before thee and given thee every encouragement to run therein.

IV

And now, lest I should weary you, I will just notice that every man in his *calling* has a sermon preached to him.

The *farmer* has a thousand sermons; I have brought them out already; let him open wide his eyes, and he shall see more. He need not go an inch without hearing the songs of angels, and the voices of spirits wooing him to righteousness, for all nature round about him has a tongue given to it, when man hath an ear to hear.

There are others, however, engaged in a business which allows them to see but very little of nature, and yet even there God has provided them with a lesson. There is the *baker* who provides us with our bread. He thrusts his fuel into the oven, and he causeth it to glow with heat, and he puts bread therein. Well may he, if he be an ungodly man, tremble as he stands at the oven's mouth, for there is a text which he may well comprehend as he stands there: "For the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; they shall be consumed. Men ingather them in bundles and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." Out of the oven's mouth comes a hot and burning

warning, and the man's heart might melt like wax within him if he would but regard it.

Then see the *butcher.* How doth the beast speak to him? He sees the lamb almost lick his knife, and the bullock goes unconsciously to the slaughter. How might he think every time that he smites the unconscious animal (who knows nothing of death) of his own doom. Are we not, all of us who are without Christ, fattening for the slaughter? Are we not more foolish than the bullock, for doth not the wicked man follow his executioner, and walk after his own destroyer into the very chambers of hell? When we see a drunkard pursuing his drunkenness, or an unchaste man running in the way of licentiousness, is he not as an ox going to the slaughter, until a dart smite him through the liver? Hath not God sharpened his knife and made ready his ax that the fatlings of this earth may be killed, when he shall say to the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field, " Behold, I have made a feast of vengeance for you, and ye shall feast upon the blood of the slain, and make yourselves drunken with the streams thereof "? Aye, butcher, there is a lecture for you in your trade; and your business may reproach you.

And ye whose craft is to sit still all day, making shoes for our feet, the lapstone in your lap may reproach you, for your heart, perhaps, is as hard as that. Have you not been smitten as often as your lapstone, and yet your heart has never been broken or melted? And what shall the Lord say to you at last, when your stony heart being still within you, he shall condemn you and cast you away because you would have none of his rebukes and would not turn at the voice of his exhortation?

Let the *brewer* remember that as he brews he must drink. Let the *potter* tremble lest he be like a vessel marred upon the wheel. Let the *printer* take heed, that his life be set in heavenly type, and not in the black letter of sin. *Painter,* beware! for paint will not suffice, we must have unvarnished realities.

Others of you are engaged in business where you are continually using scales and measures. Might you not often put yourselves into those scales? Might you not fancy you saw the great Judge standing by with his gospel in one scale and you in the other, and solemnly looking down upon you, saying, "*Mene, mene, tekel* — thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting"? Some of you use the measure, and when you have measured out, you cut off the portion that your customer requires. Think of your life too, it is to be of a certain length, and every year brings the measure a little further, and at last there come the scissors that shall clip off your life, and it is done. How knowest thou when thou art come to the last inch? What is that disease thou hast about thee, but the first snip of the scissors? What that trembling in thy bones, that failing in thy eyesight, that fleeing of thy memory, that departure of thy youthful vigor, but the first rent? How soon shalt thou be rent in twain, the remnant of thy days past away, and thy years all numbered and gone, misspent and wasted forever!

But you say you are engaged as a *servant* and your occupations are diverse. Then diverse are the lectures God preaches to you. "A servant waits for his wages and the hireling fulfilleth his day." There is a similitude for thee, when thou hast fulfilled thy day on earth, and shalt take thy wages at last. Who then is thy master? Art thou serving Satan and the lusts of the flesh, and wilt thou take out thy wages at last in the hot metal of destruction? Or art thou serving the fair prince Emmanuel, and shall thy wages be the golden crowns of heaven? Oh! happy art thou if thou servest a good master, for according to thy master shall be thy reward; as is thy labor such shall the end be.

V

Or art thou one that *guideth the pen,* and from hour to hour wearily thou writest? Ah! man, know that thy life is a

writing. When thy hand is not on the pen, thou art a writer still; thou art always writing upon the pages of eternity; thy sins thou art writing or else thy holy confidence in him that loved thee. Happy shall it be for thee, O writer, if thy name is written in the Lamb's book of life, and if that black writing of thine, in the history of thy pilgrimage below, shall have been blotted out with the red blood of Christ, and thou shalt have written upon thee, the fair name of Jehovah, to stand legible forever.

Or perhaps thou art a *physician* or a *chemist;* thou prescribest or preparest medicines for man's body. God stands there by the side of thy pestle and thy mortar; and by the table where thy writest thy prescriptions, and he says to thee, " Man, thou art sick; I can prescribe for thee. The blood and righteousness of Christ, laid hold of by faith, and applied by the Spirit, can cure thy soul. I can compound a medicine for thee that shall rid thee of thy ills and bring thee to the place where the inhabitants shall no more say, ' I am sick.' Wilt thou take my medicine or wilt thou reject it? Is it bitter to thee, and dost thou turn away from it? Come, drink, my child, drink, for thy life lieth here; and how shalt thou escape if thou neglect so great salvation? " Do you cast iron, or melt lead, or fuse the hard metals of the mines? Then pray that the Lord may melt thine heart and cast thee in the mold of the gospel! Do you make garments for men? Oh, be careful that you find a garment for yourself forever.

Are you busy in *building* all day long, laying the stone upon its fellow and the mortar in its crevice? Then remember thou art building for eternity too. Oh that thou mayest thyself be built upon a good foundation! Oh that thou mayest build thereon, not wood, hay, or stubble, but gold, and silver, and precious stones, and things that will abide the fire! Take care, man, lest thou shouldest be God's scaffold, lest thou shouldest be used on earth to be a scaffolding for building his church, and when his church is built thou shouldest be cast

down and burned up with fire unquenchable. Take heed that thou art built upon a rock, and not upon the sand, and that the vermilion cement of the Savior's precious blood unites thee to the foundation of the building, and to every stone thereof.

Art thou a *jeweler,* and dost thou cut the gem and polish the diamond from day to day? Would to God thou wouldest take warning from the contrast which thou presentest to the stone on which thou dost exercise thy craft. Thou cuttest it, and it glitters the more thou dost cut it; but though thou hast been cut and ground, though thou hast had cholera and fever, and hast been at death's door many a day, thou art none the brighter, but the duller, for alas! thou art no diamond. Thou art but the pebble-stone of the brook, and in the day when God makes up his jewels he shall not enclose thee in the casket of his treasures; for thou art not one of the precious sons of Zion, comparable unto fine gold. But be thy situation what it may, be thy calling what it may, there is a continual sermon preached to thy conscience. I would that thou wouldest now from this time forth open both eye and ear, and see and hear the things that God would teach thee.

And now, dropping the similitude while the clock shall tick but a few times more, let us put the matter thus — Sinner, thou art as yet without God and without Christ; thou art liable to death every hour. Thou canst not tell but that thou mayest be in the flames of hell before the clock shall strike one today. Thou art today "condemned already," because thou believest not in the Son of God. And Jesus Christ saith to thee this day, "Oh, that thou wouldest consider thy latter end!" He cries to thee this morning, "How often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not." I entreat you, consider your ways. If it be worth while to make your bed in hell, do it. If the pleasures of this world are worth being damned to all eternity for enjoying them, if heaven be a cheat and hell a delu-

sion, go on with your sins. But, if there be hell for sinners and heaven for repenting ones, and if thou must dwell a whole eternity in one place or the other, without similitude, I put a plain question to thee — Art thou wise in living as thou dost, without thought — careless, and godless? Wouldest thou ask now the way of salvation? It is simply this — "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." He died; he rose again; thou art to believe him to be thine; thou art to believe that he is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him. But, more than that, believing that to be a fact, thou art to cast thy soul upon that fact and trust to him, sink or swim. Spirit of God! help us each to do this; and by similitude, or by providence, or by Thy prophets, bring us each to Thyself and save us eternally, and unto Thee shall be the glory.*

* From *Sermons — Fifth Series* (New York: Sheldon & Co., 1859).

Dwight Lyman Moody

1837 — 1899

DWIGHT LYMAN MOODY was born February 5, 1837, in Northfield, Massachusetts; he died there December 22, 1899. The Moodys were among the original proprietors of Hartford and had from generation to generation moved up "the valley." The Holdens during Moody's lifetime still held their homestead under the original grant from the British crown. They took it up when Northfield was a lonely outpost on the northern colonial frontier in peril of the French and the Indians. Moody inherited their force and tenacity. He was always a pioneer though his quest was the quest for souls.

His boyhood was passed in laborious poverty, his schooling was soon done. The need to make his own living took him from Northfield to Boston and from Boston to Chicago. He had in him the making of a captain of industry but a profounder necessity made him an evangelist in the oldest and most searching sense of that great word. He combined self-revelation with a strange reticence. He afterwards spoke, and often, of the inner stages of his religious growth and accessions of power, but there was always something he did not tell — perhaps he could not.

It is not easy to put the quality and drive of Moody's entirely consecrated force into any adequate words. He did have a "single-track" purpose but he moved toward its achievement along a wide front and the range of his activities during his residence in Chicago cannot easily be indicated, still less told about in condensed form. The most significant single thing in the period was probably his discovery and commandeering — there is no other word — of Ira D. Sankey,

the singer. His mind may have been turned toward Great Britain by his marriage with Miss Revell. He seems to have gone first to meet English preachers and religious leaders whose power had captured his imagination, and to have sensed what on the face of it would seem impossible, a promise of sympathetic reception and opportunity; he would have called it an open door. His second visit was mainly exploratory. Finally in 1873, with four hundred and fifty dollars, Sankey and an audacious faith, Moody landed in Liverpool and began a work in England and Scotland which can hardly be paralleled. He won his reputation in America through his British mission.

Thereafter till his death he was the outstanding evangelist in the English-speaking world and the bare recital of his activities is breath-taking. He made Northfield his home so far as so tireless a traveler so widely in demand could have a home, built his schools on hills which commanded the loveliest of prospects, assembled and organized conferences of Christian workers and college youth, brought the outstanding religious leaders to his native village and established institutions of a corporate and creative solidity. He was buried under the pines which may have sheltered him in some boyhood hour; and memory, loyalty and generations of young people for whom he opened doors of education and opportunity still make his grave a shrine.

Naturally he has supplied biographers fascinating material and they have assembled and preserved such a wealth of estimate and reminiscence as has centered upon few men of his century. I think his name will be found in more indices of the biographies and autobiographies of nineteenth century religious leaders than any other name save Newman's. The direct and indirect range of his influence is beyond precise estimate. At the heart of it was the gravity, the force of his personality. It had a gripping, quickening, transforming power. One might or might not accept his doctrinal bases:

no matter. No one could feel the contact of him without acknowledging it, and in some way carrying it on and out.

He was a born leader and his leadership was empowered by its devotion to ends and causes in which he had so completely lost himself as to find himself again, master of men and assemblages. He was never ordained but probably spoke to more people than any man of his century. His faith was the inherited faith of evangelical Protestantism, simple, massive, moving. His Bible was God's word, literal, infallible, all-sufficient. He knew its characters as he knew his neighbors on Northfield street. Humanity was lost without the cross and its redemption. They were to be saved by the " blood " and there was no other salvation. All this was channeled through his immense, wise and tender humanity. Moody's gospel without Moody was a rigid orthodoxy, wearing away in a changing world. His gospel mediated through his emotional life and human understanding was a transforming power. I do not mean to say it was all emotion. It was ethically demanding and conceived and proclaimed by a great mind. But it was baptized in his passion for souls.

He played upon the great chords: memory, love, conscience, inner unhappinesses and frustrations, sadness and loss, the fear of hell and the hope of heaven. Hell not so much, but heaven always as the end of all weariness, the healing of all hurt, the reunion of the severed and the wiping away of all tears. He died believing that he had seen within its gates. His experiences with every kind of experience supplied him an inexhaustible and telling body of concrete illustrations. He preached out of life back to life. His voice was hoarse in its full use, but it could fill any auditorium. Essentially his style was simple, even homespun, careless of the niceties of grammar. But no one who heard him ever cared about that.

He repeated naturally, and preached on the whole out of a self-defined region. His great passages repeat themselves

in his sermons. He did not always unleash his full power, but when he did its passion was torrential. He had a sure sense of the essentially dramatic; he felt his way with and through an audience, shaping and reshaping his material to suit the occasion and the need. No one would dare to label any of his sermons the best. Without Moody himself something is gone which can never be recaptured. I have sought rather a representative sermon, voicing the central region in which he lived, out of which he preached, always remembering that in some other sermon all this is reshaped but never essentially changed.

GOOD NEWS

The Gospel. I COR. 15:1

I DO NOT THINK there is a word in the English language so little understood as the word "gospel." We hear it every day, and we have heard it from our earliest childhood, yet there are many people, and even many Christians, who do not really know what it means. I believe I was a child of God a long time before I really knew. The word "gospel" means "God's spell," or "good spell," or, in other words, "good news." The gospel is good tidings of great joy. No better news ever came out of heaven than the gospel. No better news ever fell upon the ears of the family of man than the gospel. When the angels came down to proclaim the tidings, what did they say to those shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem? "Behold, I bring you *sad* tidings"? No! "Behold, I bring you *bad* news"? No! "Behold, I bring you *good* tidings of *great joy*, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior."

If those shepherds had been like a good many people at the present time, they would have said, "We do not believe

it is good news. It is all excitement. These angels want to get up a revival. These angels are trying to excite us. Don't you believe them." That is what Satan is saying now. "Don't you believe the gospel is good news; it will only make you miserable." He knows the moment a man believes good news, he just receives it. And no one who is under the power of the devil really believes that the gospel is good news. But these shepherds believed the message that the angels brought, and their hearts were filled with joy. If a boy came with a despatch to someone here, could you not tell by the receiver's looks what kind of a message it was? If it brought good news you would see it in his face in a moment.

If it told him that his boy, away in some foreign land, a prodigal son, had come to himself, like the one in the fifteenth of Luke, do you not think that father's face would light up with joy? And if his wife were here, he would not wait till they got home, or till she asked for it, he would pass it over to her, and her face would brighten too, as she shared his joy. But the tidings that the gospel brings are more glorious than that. We are dead in trespasses and sins, and the gospel offers life. We are enemies to God, and the gospel offers reconciliation. The world is in darkness, and the gospel offers light. Because man will not believe the gospel that Christ is the light of the world, the world is dark today. But the moment a man believes, the light from Calvary crosses his path and he walks in an unclouded sun.

I want to tell you why I like the gospel. It is because it has been the very best news I have ever heard. That is just why I like to preach it, because it has done me so much good. No man can ever tell what it has done for him, but I think I can tell what it has *undone*. It has taken out of my path four of the bitterest enemies I ever had.

I

There is that terrible enemy mentioned in I Corinthians 15, the last enemy, *death*. The gospel has taken it out of the way. My mind very often rolls back twenty years ago, before I was converted, and I think how dark it used to seem, as I thought of the future. I well remember how I used to look on death as a terrible monster, how he used to throw his dark shadow across my path; how I trembled as I thought of the terrible hour when he should come for me; how I thought I should like to die of some lingering disease, such as consumption, so that I might know when he was coming. It was the custom in our village to toll from the old church bell the age of anyone who died. Death never entered that village and tore away one of the inhabitants but I counted the tolling of the bell. Sometimes it was seventy, sometimes eighty; sometimes it would be away down among the teens, sometimes it would toll out the death of someone of my own age. It made a solemn impression upon me. I felt a coward then. I thought of the cold hand of death feeling for the cords of life. I thought of being launched forth to spend my eternity in an unknown land.

As I looked into the grave, and saw the sexton throw the earth on the coffin-lid, "Earth to earth; ashes to ashes; dust to dust," it seemed like the death knell to my soul. But that is all changed now. The grave has lost its terror. As I go on towards heaven I can shout, "O death! where is thy sting?" and I hear the answer rolling down from Calvary — "Buried in the bosom of the Son of God." He took the sting right out of death for me, and received it into his own bosom. Take a hornet and pluck the sting out; you are not afraid of it after that any more than of a fly. So death has lost its sting. That last enemy has been overcome, and I can look on death as a crushed victim. All that death can get now is this old Adam, and I do not care how quickly

I get rid of it. I shall get a glorified body, a resurrection body, a body much better than this.

Suppose death should come stealing up into this pulpit, and lay his icy hand upon my heart, and it should cease to throb, I should rise to the better world to be present with the King. The gospel has made an enemy a friend. What a glorious thought, that when you die you but sink into the arms of Jesus, to be borne to the land of everlasting rest! "To die," the apostle says, "is gain." I can imagine when they laid our Lord in Joseph's tomb one might have seen death sitting over that sepulcher, saying, "I have him; he is my victim. He said he was the resurrection and the life. Now I hold him in my cold embrace. They thought he was never going to die; but see him now. He has had to pay tribute to me." Never! The glorious morning comes, the Son of man bursts asunder the bands of death, and rises, a conqueror from the grave. "Because I live," he shouts, "ye shall live also." Yes, *ye shall live also* — is it not good news? Ah, my friends, there is no bad news about a gospel which makes it so sweet to live, so sweet to die.

Another terrible enemy that troubled me was *sin*. What a terrible hour I thought it would be, when my sins from childhood, every secret thought, every evil desire, everything done in the dark, shall be brought to the light, and spread before an assembled universe! Thank God, these thoughts are gone. The gospel tells me my sins are all put away in Christ. Out of love to me he has taken all my sins and cast them behind his back. That is a safe place for them. God never turns back; he always marches on. He will never see your sins if they are behind his back — that is one of his own illustrations. Satan has to get behind God to find them. How far away are they, and can they ever come back again? "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." Not some of them; he takes them all away.

You may pile up your sins till they rise like a dark mountain, and then multiply them by ten thousand for those you cannot think of; and after you have tried to enumerate all the sins you have ever committed, just let me bring one verse in, and that mountain will melt away: "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." In Ireland, some time ago, a teacher asked a little boy if there was anything God could not do; and the little fellow said, "Yes; he cannot see my sins through the blood of Christ." That is just what he cannot do. The blood covers them. Is it not good news that you can get rid of sin? You come to Christ a sinner, and if you receive his gospel your sins are taken away. You are invited to do this; nay, he entreats you to do it. You are invited to make an exchange; to get rid of all your sins, and to take Christ and his righteousness in the place of them. Is not that good news?

There is another enemy which used to trouble me a great deal — *judgment*. I used to look forward to the terrible day when I should be summoned before God. I could not tell whether I should hear the voice of Christ saying, "Depart from me, ye cursed," or whether it would be, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." And I thought that till he stood before the great white throne no man could tell whether he was to be on the right hand or the left. But the gospel tells me that is already settled: "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." "Verily, verily" — and when you see that word in Scripture, you may know there is something very important coming — "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and *shall not* come into condemnation, but *is passed* from death unto life." Well, now, *I* am not coming into judgment for sin. It is no open question. God's word has settled it. Christ was judged for me, and died in my stead, and I go free. He that believeth *hath* — h–a–t–h, hath.

Is not that good news? A man prayed for me the other day that I might obtain eternal life at last. I could not have said "amen" to that. If he meant it in this sense, I obtained eternal life many years ago, when I was converted. What is the gift of God, if it is not eternal life? And what makes the gospel such good news? Is it not that it offers eternal life to every poor sinner who will take it? If an angel came straight from the throne of God, and proclaimed that God had sent him here to offer us any one thing we might ask — that each one should have his own petition granted — what would be your cry?

There would be but one response, and the cry would make heaven ring: "Eternal life! eternal life!" Everything else would float away into nothingness. It is life men want, men value most. Let a man worth a million dollars be on a wrecked vessel, and if he could just save his life for six months by giving that million, he would give it in an instant. But the gospel is not a six months' gift. "The gift of God is eternal life." And is it not one of the greatest marvels that men have to stand and plead, and pray and beseech their fellow men to take this precious gift of God?

My friends, there is one spot on earth where the fear of death, of sin, and of judgment, need never trouble us, the only safe spot on earth where the sinner can stand — Calvary. Out in our western country, in the autumn, when men go hunting, and there has not been any rain for months, sometimes the prairie grass catches fire. Sometimes, when the wind is strong, the flames may be seen rolling along, twenty feet high, destroying men and beast in their onward rush. When the frontiersmen see what is coming, what do they do to escape? They know they cannot run as fast as that fire can run. Not the fleetest horse can escape it. They just take a match and light the grass around them. The flames sweep onwards; they take their stand in the burnt district, and are safe.

They hear the flames roar as they come along; they see death bearing down upon them with resistless fury, but they do not fear. They do not even tremble as the ocean of flame surges around them, for over the place where they stand the fire has already passed, and there is no danger. There is nothing for the fire to burn. And there is one spot on earth that God has swept over. Eighteen hundred years ago the storm burst on Calvary, and the Son of God took it into his own bosom, and now, if we take our stand by the cross, we are safe for time and for eternity.

Sinner, would you be safe tonight? Would you be free from the condemnation of the sins that are past, from the power of the temptations that are to come? Then take your stand on the Rock of Ages. Let death, let the grave, let the judgment come, the victory is Christ's, and yours through him. Oh, will you not receive this gospel tonight — this wonderful message of his sacrifice for you?

II

Some people, when the gospel is preached, put on a long face, as if they had to attend a funeral or witness an execution, or hear some dry, stupid lecture or sermon. It was my privilege to go into Richmond with General Grant's army. I had not been long there before it was announced that the Negroes were going to have a jubilee meeting. These colored people were just coming into liberty; their chains were falling off, and they were just awakening to the fact that they were free. I thought it would be a great event, and I went down to the African Church, one of the largest in the south, and found it crowded. One of the colored chaplains of a northern regiment had offered to speak. I have heard many eloquent men in Europe and in America but I do not think I ever heard eloquence such as I heard that day.

He said, " Mothers! you rejoice today; you are forever free! That little child has been torn from your embrace, and sold

off to some distant state for the last time. Your hearts are never to be broken again in that way; you are free." The women clapped their hands and shouted at the top of their voices, "Glory, glory to God!" It was good news to them, and they believed it. It filled them full of joy. Then he turned to the young men, and said, "Young men! you rejoice today; you have heard the crack of the slavedriver's whip for the last time; your posterity shall be free; young men, rejoice today, you are forever free!" And they clapped their hands, and shouted, "Glory to God!" They believed the good tidings. "Young maidens!" he said, "you rejoice today. You have been put on the auction block and sold for the last time; you are free — forever free!" They believed it, and lifting up their voices, shouted, "Glory be to God!" I never was in such a meeting. They *believed* that it was good news to them.

My friends, I bring you better tidings than that. No colored man or woman ever had such a mean, wicked, cruel master as those that are serving Satan. Do I speak to a man who is a slave to strong drink? Christ can give you strength to hurl the cup from you, and make you a sober man, a loving husband, a kind father. Yes, poor wife of the drunkard, he gives you good news; your husband may become a sober man again. And you, poor sinner, you who have been so rebellious and wayward, the gospel brings a message of forgiveness to you. God wants you to be reconciled to him. "Be ye reconciled unto God." It is his message to you — a message of friendship. Here is a little story of reconciliation which I was told lately; perhaps it may help you a little:

There was an Englishman who had an only son; and only sons are often petted, and humored, and ruined. This boy became very headstrong, and very often he and his father had trouble. One day they had a quarrel, and the father was very angry, and so was the son; and the father said he wished the boy would leave home and never come back. The

boy said he would go, and would not come into his father's house again till he sent for him. The father said he would never send for him. Well, away went the boy. But when a father gives up a boy, a mother does not. You mothers will understand that, but the fathers may not. You know there is no love on earth so strong as a mother's love. A great many things may separate a man and his wife; a great many things may separate a father from a son; but there is nothing in the wide world that can ever separate a true mother from her child. To be sure, there are some mothers that have drunk so much liquor, that they have drunk up all their affection. But I am talking about a true mother; and she would never cast off her boy.

Well, the mother began to write, and plead with the boy to write to his father first, and he would forgive him; but the boy said, "I will never go home till father asks me." Then she pled with the father, but the father said, "No, I will never ask him." At last the mother came down to her sickbed, broken-hearted, and when she was given up by the physicians to die, the husband, anxious to gratify her last wish, wanted to know if there was nothing he could do for her before she died. The mother gave him a look; he well knew what it meant. Then she said, "Yes, there is one thing you can do. You can send for my boy. That is the only wish on earth you can gratify. If you do not pity him and love him when I am dead and gone, who will?" "Well," said the father, "I will send word to him that you want to see him." "No," she says, "you know he will not come for me. If ever I see him you must send for him."

At last the father went to his office and wrote a despatch in his own name, asking the boy to come home. As soon as he got the invitation from his father he started off to see his dying mother. When he opened the door to go in he found his mother dying, and his father by the bedside. The father heard the door open, and saw the boy, but instead of

going to meet him he went to another part of the room, and refused to speak to him. His mother seized his hand — how she had longed to press it! She kissed him, and then said, "Now, my son, just speak to your father. You speak first, and it will all be over." But the boy said, "No, mother, I will not speak to him until he speaks to me."

She took her husband's hand in one hand and the boy's in the other, and spent her dying moments in trying to bring about a reconciliation. Then just as she was expiring — she could not speak — so she put the hand of the wayward boy into the hand of the father, and passed away! The boy looked at the mother, and the father at the wife, and at last the father's heart broke, and he opened his arms, and took that boy to his bosom, and by that body they were reconciled. Sinner, that is only a faint type, a poor illustration, because God is not angry with you. I bring you tonight to the dead body of Christ. I ask you to look at the wounds in his hands and feet, and the wound in his side. And I ask you, Will you not be reconciled? When he left heaven, he went down into the manger that he might get hold of the vilest sinner, and put the hand of the wayward prodigal into that of the Father, and he died that you and I might be reconciled. If you take my advice you will not sleep tonight until you are reconciled. "Be ye reconciled." Oh, this gospel of reconciliation! My friends, is it not a glad gospel?

III

And then it is a *free* gospel; anyone may have it. You need not ask, "For whom is this good news?" It is for yourself. If you would like Christ's own word for it, come with me to that scene in Jerusalem where the disciples are bidding him farewell. Calvary with all its horrors is behind him; Gethsemane is over, and Pilate's judgment hall. He has passed the grave, and is about to take his place at the right hand of the Father. Around him stands his little band of

disciples, the little church he was to leave behind him to be his witnesses. The hour of parting has come, and he has some "last words" for them. Is he thinking about himself in these closing moments? Is he thinking about the throne that is waiting him, and the Father's smile that will welcome him to heaven? Is he going over in memory the scenes of the past; or is he thinking of the friends who have followed him so far, who will miss him so much when he is gone?

No, he is thinking about *you.* You imagined he would think of those who loved him? No, sinner, he thought of you then. He thought of his enemies, those who shunned him, those who despised him, those who killed him — he thought what more he could do for them. He thought of those who would hate him, of those who would have none of his gospel, of those who would say it was too good to be true, of those who would make excuse that he never died for *them.* And then turning to his disciples, his heart just bursting with compassion, he gives them his farewell charge, "Go ye into *all* the world and preach the gospel to *every creature.*" They are almost his last words, "to every creature."

I can imagine Peter saying, "Lord, do you really mean that we shall preach the gospel to *every* creature?" "Yes, Peter." "Shall we go back to Jerusalem and preach the gospel to those Jerusalem sinners who murdered you?" "Yes, Peter, go back and tarry there until you are endued with power from on high. Offer the gospel to them first. Go, search out that man who spat in my face; tell him I forgive him; there is nothing in my heart but love for him. Go, search out the man who put that cruel crown of thorns on my brow; tell him I will have a crown ready for him in my Kingdom, if he will accept salvation; there shall not be a thorn in it, and he shall wear it forever and ever in the Kingdom of his Redeemer.

"Find out that man who took the reed from my hand, and smote my head, driving the thorns deeper into my brow.

If he will accept salvation as a gift, I will give him a scepter, and he shall sway it over the nations of the earth. Yes, I will give him to sit with me upon my throne. Go, seek that man who struck me with the palm of his hand; find him, and preach the gospel to him; tell him that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, and my blood was shed for him freely." Yes, I can imagine him saying, " Go, seek out that poor soldier who drove the spear into my side; tell him that there is a nearer way to my heart than that. Tell him that I forgive him freely; and tell him I will make him a soldier of the cross, and my banner over him shall be love."*

I thank God that the gospel is to be preached to *every* creature. I thank God the commission is so free. There is no man so far gone, but the grace of God can reach him; no man so desperate or so black, but he can forgive him. Yes, I thank God I can preach the gospel to the man or the woman who is as black as hell itself. I thank God for the " whosoevers " of the invitations of Christ. " God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life "; and " *Whosoever* will, let him take the water of life freely."

I heard of a woman once who thought there was no promise in the Bible for her, they were all for other people. One day she got a letter, and when she opened it, found it was not for her at all, but for some other woman of the same name. It led her to ask herself, " If I should find some promise in the Bible directed to *me,* how should I know that it meant *me,* and not some other woman? " And she found out that she must just take God at his word, and include herself among the " whosoevers " and the " every creatures " to whom the gospel is freely preached. I know that word " whosoever " means every man, every woman, every

* This is one of Moody's most famous passages. Henry Drummond remarked on its power.

child in this wide world. It means that boy down there, that gray-haired man, that maiden in the blush of youth, that young man breaking a mother's heart, that drunkard steeped in misery and sin. Oh, my friends, will you not believe this good news. Will you not receive this wonderful gospel of Christ? Will you not believe, poor sinner, that it means *you?* Will you say it is too good to be true?

I was in Ohio a few years ago, and was invited to preach in the state prison. Eleven hundred convicts were brought into the chapel, and all sat in front of me. After I had got through the preaching, the chaplain said to me: " Mr. Moody, I want to tell you of a scene which occurred in this room. A few years ago, our commissioners went to the governor of the state, and got him to promise that he would pardon five men for good behavior. The governor consented, with this understanding — that the record was to be kept secret, and that at the end of six months the five men highest on the roll should receive a pardon, regardless of who or what they were. At the end of six months the prisoners were all brought into the chapel; the commissioners came up, and the president stood up on the platform, and putting his hand in his pocket, brought out some papers, and said, ' I hold in my hand pardons for five men.' "

The chaplain told me he never witnessed anything on earth like it. Every man was as still as death; many were deadly pale, and the suspense was awful; it seemed as if every heart had ceased to beat. The commissioner went on to tell them how they had got the pardon; but the chaplain interrupted him. " Before you make your speech, read out the names." " Reuben Johnson will come and get his pardon " — and he held it out, but none came forward. He said to the governor, " Are all the prisoners here? " The governor told him they were all there. Then he said again, " Reuben Johnson will come and get his pardon. It is signed and sealed by the governor. He is a free man." Not one moved. The

chaplain told me he looked right down where Reuben was; he was well known; he had been nineteen years there, and many were looking round to see him spring to his feet. But he himself was looking round to see the fortunate man who had got his pardon. Finally the chaplain caught his eye and said, "Reuben, you are the man." Reuben turned round and looked behind him to see where Reuben was. The chaplain said the second time, "Reuben, *you* are the man"; and the second time he looked round, thinking it must be some other Reuben.

So men do not believe the gospel is for them. They think it is too good, and pass it over their shoulders to the next man. But *you* are the man tonight. Well, the chaplain could see where Reuben was, and he had to say three times, "Reuben, come and get your pardon." At last the truth began to steal over the old man; he got up and came along down the hall, trembling from head to foot, and when he got the pardon he looked at it, and went back to his seat, and buried his face in his hands, and wept. When the prisoners got into the ranks to go back to the cells, Reuben got into the ranks too, and the chaplain had to call to him, "Reuben, get out of the ranks; you are a free man, you are no longer a prisoner." And Reuben stepped out of the ranks. He was free!

That is the way men make out pardons. They make them out for good character or good behavior. But God makes out pardons for men who have not got any character, who have been very, very bad. He offers a pardon to every sinner on earth if he will take it. I do not care who he is or what he is like. He may be the greatest libertine that ever walked the streets, or the greatest blackguard who ever lived, or the greatest drunkard, or thief, or vagabond; but I come tonight with glad tidings, and preach the gospel to *every creature.**

* From *Twelve Select Sermons* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1884)

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